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FROM CAMP TO COMMUNITY: MUSICAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN THE 2008  
INTERNATIONAL CHORAL ENSEMBLE

BY

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THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

During the summer of 2008, the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp International Choral Ensemble, as a community and individuals, represented American youth, Blue Lake, and the United States as cultural ambassadors, touring in Europe and the Midwest. Throughout the rehearsal and performance process, these adolescents, ages thirteen to nineteen, became a tight-knit community, expressing feelings of belonging and group identity. Despite the short rehearsal time, the choir intensely mastered a challenging musical repertoire, presenting their hard work as musical gifts and the content of cultural exchange to host families and communities. The choir's flexibility to adapt to situations requiring them to participate in regional and national celebrations highlights the strengths of the chorus as physical bodies, capable of producing sounds, creating strong bonds with one another, and integrating itself into communities throughout Europe to reconstitute and re-form itself as a musical body.

*To my family*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. THE BLUE LAKE INTERNATIONAL CHORAL ENSEMBLE

As I hopped out of my host mom's car, I began to survey the scene before me. Thankfully two other Blue Lakers and I were on time for this impromptu performance in St. Laurent, France, but I immediately put on my figurative counselor hat, ready to corral students in preparation for the International Choral Ensemble's first "performance" abroad.

Even though my two students and I were on time, it appeared that the vast majority of people gathered in this rural city square were French men and women. I could easily find the other students who had arrived and were arriving, thanks to all of them wearing their "dress blues," our concert uniform consisting of white polo shirts and navy blue pants or skirts. Unfortunately, the only students present were those who were fortunate enough to have received a host family, like myself, for this first European stop. With just about twenty-five of us assembled, huddled closely together, we were still missing forty-five other bodies. As we waited for the majority of our group to arrive by bus from the chalet outside of town, our host chairman and his brass band ensemble gathered to the right of our group, so that our two groups surrounded the city memorial that was central to this town's civil holiday for which Blue Lake had been invited to celebrate.

Finally the rest of our group arrived, having gotten lost in the narrow streets of St. Laurent in search of this small city space. With our director and the others, we were all finally ready to partake in the commemorative service. The other students, staff, and I

readied ourselves, looking in bags and pockets for our copy of the text to the French national anthem that we had begun to learn just two days earlier. Our host chair greeted the crowd, as most of us assumed, since few from our group could speak any French, and we commenced singing “La Marseillaise” along with the brass band.

The crowd might have sensed the nervousness this international choir from the United States was feeling; few choir members looked up from their hastily folded sheets of paper, many stumbled and struggled with pronouncing the French words, and without having learned the anthem from sheet music, parts of the melody were sung incorrectly or strategically mouthed by those who were not confident in their musical abilities. Once we had finished singing two verses and three choruses, our contribution to this city celebration and memorial ended. At this point, we could not, however, join the crowd, because other French presenters continued to address the assembly. During these remarks, I certainly noticed the inattentiveness of some of the thirteen to nineteen year olds around me. Since few understood what was spoken, most zoned out, thinking about the forthcoming concert that evening, their friends and family back in the United States, or perhaps about their experiences thus far in a country they had never before visited.

Thankfully this nerve-racking experience ended with no significantly offensive acts and no students getting sick, two goals I, as a counselor, have always aimed for when traveling with the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp (BLFAC) International Choral Ensemble. Within about thirty minutes, this group of American teenagers performed and participated in a service dedicated to the collective memory of France and St. Laurent-aux-Grandvaux. Our choir had come far, preparing for our international tour of Europe, forming relationships with each other and becoming a community of musicians, all



working together to promote cultural and musical exchange in the communities we were to visit. The choir learned of this performance only after arriving at the community two days prior, but this performative and shared exchange of history and music was only one example of how we offered our musical abilities to others to encourage compassion and fulfill an agenda structured to promote a positive opinion of American teenagers, Blue Lake, and the United States as a whole.

This anecdote is just one of many from field research completed during the spring and summer of 2008. This study of the Blue Lake International Choral Ensemble (henceforth referred to as “ICE”) was inspired by two previous summers working at the main camp of Blue Lake and traveling with ICE in 2006. From these experiences, I found that the relationships and conditions of these unique spaces and related events constituted an ideal object of study for the ethnomusicologist, particularly due to the integral role singing and choral participation played in forming tightly-knit groups revolving around a leader/conductor. From the earliest ICE rehearsals, I was dedicated to invest my scholarly and personal interests in making music with my fellow choir members. Michelle Kisliuk provides a useful anecdote, resembling my transformation during the ICE tour:

[T]he deeper our commitment in the field, the more our life stories intersect with our “subject’s,” until Self-Other boundaries are blurred. The ‘field’ becomes a heightened microcosm of life. When we begin to participate in music and dance our very being merges with the ‘field’ through our bodies and voices, and another Self-Other boundary is dissolved. (1997, 23)

My own previous experiences traveling in Europe with choirs, and my unique position within the ensemble as a staff member, singer, friend, disciplinarian, and ethnographer all contribute to how I experienced the trip with my students and placed me in a complex

“insider-outsider” relationship with the choir members, other staff, and those we encountered in Europe.

## 1.2. RELATIVE MODELS

The choir in this study deserves central focus in scholarship, as it relates to the choruses presented in Karen Ahlquist’s edited collection *Chorus and Community* (2006). This work supplements that collection, as the essays deal with and “use the chorus’s dual nature – as music and as people – to explore a musical instrument, a vehicle for a verbal text, and a social, economic, religious and/or political organization” (2006, 1). Many of her and other authors’ concerns and revelations about the nature of the choir relate directly to the project of ICE and Blue Lake as a whole. To frame this study, several important points from this collection motivate the questions I developed throughout the process of this project.

Gregory Barz, in his work with Tanzanian *kwayas* [choirs], defines and constructs the idea of a community around the parts these ensembles played throughout their interactions. A community is

a group of people that gathers for a *reason*: whether to remember and recall, to share, or to create new experiences. Communities are often fluid social structures that allow people of similar or dissimilar backgrounds to cooperate on shared objectives. A community gathers to re-enact ceremonies, stories, rituals, and memories through performance, and it typically functions as a direct connection between one’s cultural past and present. In this way community is not a static object; rather it is a process by which people come together for a particular cause or purpose. (Barz 2006, 25-26)

Choirs, as purposeful gatherings of individuals, operate similarly to communities.

Though coming together to sing and share in music inspires most choirs as a reason to meet, the relationships between members constitute an interconnected dialogue about shared values and past experiences that play out in their community against others.

Highlighting other essays, Ahlquist summarizes how some choirs are “expected to represent the community at large or the general interest,” particularly as it relates to politically-minded ensembles (2006, 5). These choirs, embodying specific ideals of culture or identity, then interact with other communities. She notes that, “[s]ince the earliest days of the European choral movement, choruses have traveled, and when they do, they may be taken as tokens of an ‘other’ that brings complexities in the home society to the fore” (Ibid.). Especially as choirs travel between North America and Europe, these issues of ideology and otherness are performed as these ensembles possessing similar choral histories meet in global communities.

Ahlquist acknowledges the complicated intricacies of the choir as both a social and artistic body. Because of how these areas interact in choral communities, additional work must be done to wring out these detailed particularities. She suggests several areas of inquiry with new questions that have yet to be answered. This study attempts to answer several of these questions. First, she asks: “How, in fact, have choruses been used politically? How have [politically-motivated groups] shaped [a choir’s] organization, activities, and music to fit their mission to the broader community?” (Ibid., 8). Second, she suggests that youth choirs should be analyzed as places where appreciations of gendered meanings and activities in the choral tradition may be better understood. Third, issues of choral aesthetics, musical blend, and repertoire choice should be considered as sources of artistic meaning.

Finally, studies on the relationship between the chorus and the conductor or with the listener would reveal more about these multifarious social interactions. On these last issues, Ahlquist emphasizes, “The relationship of the conductor to the singers can vary

from a personality cult to one of collegial self-effacement, the latter a rarer but growing phenomenon today. Further study of the psychology and the politics of this bond would enhance our grasp of the choral instrument in human terms” (Ibid., 10). Additionally, the transportability and flexibility of the choir opens its music up to a wide range of people.

Unlike genres usually presented in formal, aesthetically oriented settings (opera and the symphony come to mind), choral music can be used in many ways to support many kinds of events. For the chorus is a flexible instrument. It can switch-hit, so to speak, reaching beyond the formal audience of the Western tradition to listeners from a vast array of cultural positions. (Ibid.)

This last unique characteristic of choirs frequently manifested itself during the Blue Lake tour, offering some of the most rewarding musical experiences and materials for ethnographic study.

Ahlquist, Barz, and other contributors to *Chorus and Community* present choirs in such a way that these artistic and social bodies actively participate in the formation and transformation of communities. Along with Ahlquist’s above-mentioned directions for further study, several investigative questions result: (1) how did this choir become a community? (2) how has the music, including the concert repertoire and the musics of members and those encountered in Europe, served as a means of constituting a community? (3) what, if at all, has the group membership, structure of the program, or the hierarchy of power in the ensemble, added to this community formation? and (4) what have the choir and its members learned throughout this experience?

Addressing these and related questions, I show in this study how a choir of Americans formed a community during preparation for touring throughout Europe, with music serving as the main vehicle of exchange, friendship, and solidarity both in the United States and abroad. Taking this isolated musical group as a unit of study more

clearly demonstrates the intricacies of how musical communities are formed, learn from one another, and exchange both musical and cultural meanings with other communities.

In addition to contributing to ethnographies on community formation, this study attempts to give a voice to young people, who are often excluded from the ethnomusicological literature on Western youth because of their liminal status as teenagers. Not quite child and not quite adult, studies of adolescents seventeen and younger are further complicated because of a more hazardous process of obtaining approval from institutional review boards, as risks associated with children are taken more seriously and require full compliance of participant and parent. These students, however, still deserve a voice in the literature, and this study offers the experiences of students so that their contributions to displays of power and cultural exchange are not marginalized due to their placement in a period of maturity and transformation approaching adulthood.

### 1.3. RELEVANT LITERATURE

In addition to the advantage of this study in showing community formation in action, as highlighted in Ahlquist's compilation, this research contributes to areas of musicological study that infrequently appear in the discipline. Other research areas that this paper addresses include studies of music camps, field research with musical adolescents, and scholarship on music ensembles performing primarily Western art and popular music.

Research conducted at or focusing on music camps is unfortunately rare in musicology. Judah Cohen's study, "'And the Youth Shall See Visions': Songleading, Summer Camps, and Identity among Reform Jewish Teenagers," addresses Reform

Jewish songleading at one camp session for Jewish youth, equally relying on historical research and incorporating elements from current Reform Jewish music debates (2006, 192). He is equally concerned with the dearth of musicological literature on adolescents:

Young people are remarkably overlooked as practitioners and purveyors of musical traditions; and if mentioned at all, they tend to receive either passing inclusion as part of a larger project (Finnegan 1989: 163-64, 224-26) or anecdotal reference (Feld 1992: 20-43). This lack of attention seems to be accompanied by an unstated perception of youth as denizens of a transitory “phase” in their lives that is less stable, less powerful, and to some extent less legitimate than the arrival of adulthood. (Ibid., 189)

He argues that this consideration of songleading shows how young people’s adoption of such music reveals social constructions of the Reform youth movement.

Some music educators have also conducted their research with students participating at music camps, contributing to the field of music education and pedagogy. Vernon Burnsed and James Sochinski’s research addresses the influence of expressive performance in music education. About their selection of middle school students attending music camp at Virginia Polytechnic and State University, they write:

Caution is urged in the interpretation of the results of this study. The subjects were a select group that had chosen to attend a summer music camp. Perhaps they were more interested in music than were other middle school music students. Another concern is that the students knew they were participating in a research project. This may have influenced their performance on the preference test. (Burnsed and Sochinski 1995, 9)

This study also focuses on a highly-motivated, select group of musicians and does not assert that their experience in ICE would be or should be seen as representative of most adolescent choral musicians.

Paul Haack’s essay, “A Study in the Development of Music Learning Skills of Secondary School Students” (1969), resembles that of Burnsed and Sochinski’s; Haack chose to conduct his study on how students perceive musical and thematic relationships

at a music camp because of space control and access to subjects, even if they were a sampling of musically experienced students. Both these studies consist of educators dropping into camps, conducting their research and distributing surveys, but without observing any extramusical interactions between students or, apparently, getting to know the participants. These studies conform to the time restrictions of research appropriate for collecting data for pedagogical studies. This thesis strives to move away from pedagogical studies of adolescents, as adolescents supply information about how communities work beyond the context of music education and instruction.

Beyond the student sampling of participants at music camps, two dissertations on folk fiddling employ ethnomusicological fieldwork, observing specific camps where teaching and learning in the context of the camps are considered, with interests in how these workshops are reflected in students' later experiences at school. Virginia Garrison's study (1985) takes place in Nova Scotia, using her fieldwork to construct a model for studying and teaching practices in folk traditions. Her work with fiddling in Cape Breton is primarily motivated as a means of observing how teaching techniques aid the preservation of fiddling traditions and how these techniques translate into the classroom.

Andrew Dabczynski's dissertation is modeled after Garrison's but is more concerned with how camp practices can be implemented in public schools. As a participant at an adult summer fiddle camp, Dabczynski was particularly struck by the feelings of a sense of community by him and the other attendees. Fiddling, taken out of the traditional context of community music making in the home indeed flourished because of the rich collection of musical and social activities specifically designed by the camp organizers to instill this community feel. As will be shown, ICE's formation and

rehearsals at a summer camp, instead of within the context of the traditional adolescent choir spaces of school or church, aided in the constituted community of an ensemble that then underwent further growth as a community abroad.

Some ethnomusicology students are dealing with studies in camp settings. In particular, Anthony Guest-Scott's research consists of field experiences at Middle Eastern music and dance camps held throughout the United States (E-mail, September 14, 2008). Issues from his work that relate to this paper include ideas about world music workshops and tourism, and participant/observer relationships.

Few ethnomusicological studies of young musicians have been conducted in any setting, but Eve Harwood's work (1987) with students in Champaign-Urbana is a nice example of working with Western adolescents relating to studies with children's games and songs completed in non-Western cultures. Harwood's dissertation deals with fourth- and fifth-grade students and their song knowledge. Working with area schools and parents, Harwood collected the songs students, identified as "good singers" by their peers, could sing, thereby developing a song repertoire from this particular age and geographical population. Her essay "Go on Girl! Improvisation in African-American Girls' Singing Games" in *In the Course of Performance* (1998) addresses improvisation in African-American girls' games, where she relied on her fieldwork with an after-school club.

Kyra Gaunt's dissertation, "The Games Black Girls Play: Music, Body, and 'Soul'" (1997), is also based on fieldwork with adolescent African-American girls' experiences, adding to studies on children's musical play. She transcribes black girls' musical games, specifically handclapping, "cheers," and double-dutch, into a larger



understanding of African-American women and their musical behavior. Interestingly, her own background as African-American and as a popular music singer drew her to contribute to the scant literature on African-American women by African-Americans. Her similarity to her ethnographic subjects places her work in a similar position as this thesis. Her data, however, consist of interviews with twenty women, aged eighteen to fifty-six, thus making her study one of recollection where she did not conduct interviews with adolescents to create her data (Gaunt 1997, 20). Still, Gaunt and Harwood's topics serve as examples of North American student studies that do not ascribe to a strong pedagogical purpose; both studies address adolescent musical activities outside of music education classrooms or camps.

Inspired by Bruno Nettl's *Heartland Excursions* (1995), other ethnographies of Western art music performance have emerged in recent years. One example is Laura Lohman's dissertation "Orchestral Extraliteracy and the Foundations of American Musicology" (2001). Her study of an American orchestra's rehearsals shows how "music performance – the activities, values, and experiences of performers" is a "worthy and productive subject for musicological inquiry" (Lohman 2001, 4). Lohman observes rehearsals, conducts interviews with different orchestra members, and also relies on her own extensive experience as an orchestra member, allowing all to inform her study. Her findings are useful for musicologists as well as music educators, and she incorporates ethnomusicological methodologies to strengthen her investigation of university orchestras. Similarly, Melinda Russell engages in "ethnography at home," studying music ensembles in Decatur, IL as a way of painting a picture of musical life in one Midwestern city (1999). As a community, similar issues come up that relate to this study, and

attention is given to choirs and amateur groups, instead of any institutionalized ensembles at the local university at which Russell was currently employed. These dissertations paired together resonate with the particular object of the ICE choir that this study considers.

#### 1.4. CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Keeping these traditions in mind, this study proceeds in the following sections. Chapter Two, the “Pre-Tour” section, provides the requisite background information necessary to frame and contextualize this project. Including details about research methodology, the role of the ethnographer, and general information about the choir members, the chapter also summarizes the history of Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, the International Exchange Program, and the camp location, along with pertinent features from regular summer camp. Finally, the formation and politics of the ICE community and our activities leading up to departure for Europe are addressed.

Chapter Three consists of analyses of the music and diverse performances of the tour. In addition to information about the particularities of the “Tour,” the section presents the diverse types of relational and performative spaces and places encountered abroad, containing the contexts of and interactions with European host families and host communities, showing how ICE engaged in exchanges of ideas and values. Music, as the empowering impetus of the tour and the medium of these exchanges, constantly aided in the reconstitution of the ICE community and provided the community with the means to repay the hospitality of our hosts. Examinations of particular performances, the students’ attitudes, and the musical repertoire result in understandings of how this community reconstructed meaning and solidarity while navigating the many European communities.

Chapter Four, or “Post-Tour” report, follows ICE back to Michigan, finishing the study with accounts from students and details about the home-coming concert and tour. Questions about how the ICE community constituted itself in the face of returning home and accepting different modes of interaction after leaving Europe are addressed. Finally, the section considers the status of the community one year later and presents concluding remarks and questions for further study.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRE-TOUR

#### 2.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Choosing ICE 2008 as a particular object of study came about only months before embarking on the tour itself. After the rewarding experience of traveling with ICE during the summer of 2006 and desiring to spend some portion of the summer in Europe, I contacted the director of ICE, expressing my interest in joining him again on tour with the 2008 group. Not only was the possibility of traveling to new cities and countries an attractive prospect of joining the group, I also wanted to reconnect with the director and accompanist, both with whom I became friends during the 2006 tour. My ensemble participation as a staff member was thus solidified in September 2007 before thoughts of observing the Blue Lake international experience as a thesis project. As a new graduate student at the University of Illinois, it was only after participating in a seminar on ethnomusicology that I realized that my current summer plans could serve as both fieldwork for my thesis and as a means of traveling to Europe during the summer months.

Pre-field preparation began about six weeks before the choir was to meet in May. In the process of receiving approval from the Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB), I produced permission forms and formulations of possible interview questions. The primary collection of data occurred in 2008 during the May Weekend Rehearsal (May 16-18), June Intensive Week and United States Pre-Tour in Rockford, Illinois (June 6-15), the tour itself (June 16-July 7), our Homecoming performance at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp (July 15), and Homecoming Tour (July 28-29). I have communicated

occasionally with participants and host families since the summer of 2008, either to ask follow-up questions or to stay in touch.

The main sources of data for this study consist of examinations of (1) orientation and informational materials provided by Blue Lake for staff members, parents, students, and host communities, (2) recorded interviews and notes conducted with ICE members, (3) notes on observations from all parts of ICE's formation, (4) select video recordings and photographs either from my own collections or those from others, (5) official recordings provided by the camp and one host community in Europe, (6) posters and newspaper clippings from Europe, and (6) multi-media items posted online or on social networking websites (e.g. Facebook). These sources are meant to elicit information about (1) the camp and the international exchange in general, (2) who the students/participants are, (3) the attitudes of the choir members concerning everything from their thoughts about the tour music to their experiences with host families in Europe, and (4) anecdotes that describe the formation and re-formation of the choir as a community.

The primary source of data for this study consists of recorded interviews I conducted with choir members, usually in groups from two to four participants, during bus rides between host communities. Questions I had previously formulated, as per the IRB's stipulations, served as a basis for these interviews, but I took a more informal approach to questioning students, taking into consideration the number of choir members I was talking with, their current moods, and keeping in mind questions I had already asked or no longer seemed relevant.

This approach may raise concerns about any biases resulting from the collected qualitative data, but Kyra Gaunt's defense of a similar approach applies to this study as

well. In her communication with African-American women, she encouraged comfortable interactions between herself and the interviewee in order to take into consideration the unique cultural elements of verbal and physical exchange that are specific to the group with whom she was working. She states,

Although I had [a previously created] set of questions at hand, I allowed myself and the participant the flexibility to interact in a more conversational and/or narrative style. We did not always follow the exact order of the questions I had designed. [...] I wanted to allow a black vernacular encounter to occur if the woman felt like “going there.” (Gaunt 1997, 18)

Often the different directions that interview conversations took were more interesting and fruitful than those produced in the strictures of a set question list. To stay true to the informal and conversational style of the interviewees, their quotations are maintained as they were recorded, without editing out vocalized pauses, repetitions, or seemingly unclear phraseology.

As will be discussed in more detail, the selection of possible choir participants for this study was very rigid and was established without any personal input. ICE 2008 members applied to participate in the International Exchange Program during their times at the main camp in 2007, and International Exchange employees chose members based on their character and musical merits. Most choir members knew they had made the choir nine months prior to departure for Europe.

This project was originally designed to also incorporate interviews and conversations with members of the European host communities the choir visited, but this proved impracticable for several reasons. First, the short durations (of only three days) in each community often did not allow for enough free time to interact with host community members, let alone develop relationships with them to present my project and posit

questions. Second, my own responsibilities as a staff member often required me to attend to students when we were together, thus eliminating any time I might have had to interact with community members who attended our concerts. General observations of our interactions with the host communities, however, do factor strongly into this study, even if no official interviews were conducted with any Europeans we met throughout our travels.

## 2.2. ROLE OF THE ETHNOGRAPHER

Due to the multiple “hats” that I have worn throughout the entire process of the ICE tour, an explanation of how such an ethnographic study is situated is necessary. As with all fieldwork, the scholar’s previous experiences and biases inevitably affect all processes of collecting, writing, and presenting ethnographies, and mine are no exception. Therefore, this section places me within the narrative of ethnography as a practice and the practice of writing out this ethnography.

Two features of my own life experience led to my desire to participate in the activities at BLFAC and have thus framed my fieldwork with ICE. Since grade school, I have been singing in choirs at school and at church for nearly sixteen years. After taking voice lessons throughout high school and participating in several choirs, I decided to major in music and voice during college. Since then I have participated in choirs during college and graduate school, in the U.S. and in Germany. My first experience with BLFAC was during the summer of 2005, when I was working as a cabin counselor, singing with different staff groups and becoming acquainted with the summer and international programs. In fact, if I had not applied to be an ICE 2006 staff member,

enduring a similar application process as my students, I would not have traveled with the group in 2008.

My experiences abroad have also affected my fieldwork with Blue Lake. Beginning in high school, the German language and I have been inseparable. I first traveled to Germany after my sophomore year of high school for three weeks as part of a high school exchange program. Although this trip was with my German class, this opportunity solidified my interest in cultural exchange, whether musically motivated or not. Since I participated in a similar trip abroad as compared with what many of the ICE members were encountering for the first time, my knowledge and experiences from that trip as a teenager were invaluable as a personal reference. That experience served as a teaching tool to which students could relate when considering their feelings about the 2008 trip. Additional trips to Europe, including studying in Salzburg, Austria, and Freiburg, Germany, continue to drive my interest in the German language and culture and in sharing my knowledge. My familiarity with choral music and European languages, customs, and geography all shaped and continue to shape how I approach this ethnographic project, and thus can not be discounted in my analyses.

On the benefits of conducting fieldwork in areas one easily recognizes, Melinda Russell states, “Another attraction of local musical ethnography is that, in the same way it takes advantage of students’ relative familiarity with their own musical cultures, it invites other specialists in” (1999, 4). My knowledge, experience, and unlimited access to ICE 2008 does in fact allow other scholars into this area of research, possibly highlighting similarities within their own topics of interest.



Many of the studies mentioned acknowledge that conducting fieldwork in one's backyard raises many questions about the dichotomies, whether falsely construed and understood or not, of Occident/Orient, insider/outsider, subject(ivity)/object(ivity), and participant/observer. Since this study is largely concerned with a Western ensemble that performs exclusively American or European music and is geographically situated in Michigan and in Europe, it qualifies as doing "ethnomusicology at home." Describing her own study as such, Laura Lohman further explains this conception in ethnomusicology:

Fieldwork conducted within one's own society has received a variety of labels, including "insider research," "autoethnography," and "indigenous anthropology," among many others. By using terms "insider," "auto-," and "indigenous," these three labels evince one of many ambiguities about this research approach – to what extent the researcher is an insider. (2001, 53)

Similarly, when explaining why she was doing fieldwork in Decatur, Illinois, Russell faced the assumption that "ethnomusicology is still considered the study of the far away or at least the hidden" and not a study of the community to which one belongs (1999, 2). Studies falling under the category of "ethnomusicology at home," however, have increased in recent decades, and students today spend less time defending their choice to study the local or the familiar.

This study does not need to rest on an assumption of distance or being hidden from mainstream culture. Instead, it is something that appears familiar to all who remember their adolescence while still remaining somewhat removed from an adult's conceptualization of the world, especially as he or she ages and becomes further removed from this period of maturation. In this project, it is difficult to identify an insider and an outsider, and this question relates to subjectivity and objectivity. I hope to treat these complexities using the approach advanced by Lila Abu-Lughod's "Writing Against

Culture” in *Recapturing Anthropology* (1991). She addresses the relationship of two types of anthropologists, feminists and “halfies,”<sup>1</sup> and their relationships with their informants. Abu-Lughod argues that these scholars face “a blocked ability to comfortably assume the self of anthropology. For both [feminists and halfies], although in different ways, the self is split, caught at the intersection of systems of difference” (Ibid., 140). This positionality of such scholars as an insider and outsider, self and other, has drawn criticisms from others, specifically that the feminist report is not objective enough due to the partiality and political agenda of the observer, and that the halfie anthropologist presents a partial picture.

Her solution to this issue calls into question the foundation of ethnography on culture, cultural difference and generalizations, and she instead advocates conducting ethnographies of the particular, studies which are well suited to feminist and halfie scholars who more easily enter the daily lives of their informants. Her fieldwork with a Bedouin matriarch highlights the benefits of focusing on the particular and choosing not to make generalizations about an idealized and bounded culture. “By focusing closely on particular individuals and their changing relationships, one would necessarily subvert the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness” (Ibid., 154). Expounding on these principles, she states that

[t]he special value of this strategy [of ethnographies of the particular] is that it brings out similarities in all our lives. [...] [T]he dailiness, in breaking coherence and introducing time, keeps us fixed on flux and contradiction. And the particulars suggest that others live as we perceive ourselves living, not as robots programmed with “cultural” rules, but as people going through life agonizing over decisions, making mistakes, trying to make themselves look good, enduring tragedies and personal losses, enjoying others, and finding moments of happiness. (Ibid., 158)

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<sup>1</sup> Abu-Lughod defines “halfies” as “people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (1991, 137).

Although this study does not concentrate only on one or several individuals, approaching this study of one specific community as an ethnography of the particular shows how the every day elements and processes of becoming a choir contributes to a better understanding of the community's formation.

My unique position in this study is also typified by several of Abu-Lughod's points. Since I am not working as a feminist, and Abu-Lughod distinguishes anthropologists working in Western societies as different from halfie anthropologists, I do not naturally fit in with the struggles and positionings of these two groups. I argue, however, that I do face the same issues as feminist and halfie anthropologists because of who I am working with and what the distinctive relationships and roles I have with ICE are within the larger picture of my personal experiences. This positioning of the ethnographer manifests itself in several ways due to connections with different actors contributing to this choir's formation.

My previous experiences as a choral singer and teenage traveler make this ethnography into a study of my own society, not only because it takes place in the United States and Europe. Abu-Lughod states, "The problem with studying one's own society is alleged to be the problem of gaining enough distance" (Ibid., 141). Beyond my association with Western society shared with ICE choir members, this issue of distance is further complicated when addressing the physical nearness of myself-as-counselor to the group. My responsibilities of eating, sleeping, singing, dancing, performing, and, in all senses of the word, living, among ICE members are an extreme example of the ethnographer's nearness to the field. I am firmly lodged within the "society" I am studying, making it difficult to confront insider/outsider distinctions.

Another complication of split selfhood, Abu-Lughod notes, is that these scholars are often writing for multiple audiences. I argue that this study should not be considered, and is not intended, only as a contribution to scholarship in music education. Although music educators may find it insightful, I believe this study has great value for musicologists and anthropologists. Additionally, I must consider how this study will be received by the ICE and Blue Lake community, parents, and those who share similar experiences with music, travel, and adolescence, as I am effectively writing their stories as well as mine. Clearly this study factors into Abu-Lughod's explanation of halfie anthropologists wrestling with multiple audiences:

not just because [halfie scholars] position themselves with reference to two communities but because when they present the Other they are presenting themselves, they speak with a complex awareness of and investment in reception. Both halfie and feminist anthropologists are forced to confront squarely the politics and ethics of their representations. (Ibid., 142)

With little work done by musicologists in teenage communities, it seems unclear how this research will be received, leaving many of the political or ethical questions unanswered until others, insiders and outsiders, respond.

Abu-Lughod's third issue that strongly aligns my study to those of feminists and halfies concerns experiences of inequality. Her description deserves extensive quotation as two components relate to my project.

The third issue that feminist and halfie anthropologists, unlike anthropologists who work in Western societies, [...], force us to confront is the dubiousness of maintaining that relationships between self and other are innocent of power. Because of sexism and racial or ethnic discrimination, they may have experienced – as women, as individuals of mixed parentage, or as foreigners – being other to a dominant self, whether in everyday life in the U.S., Britain, or France, or in the Western academy. This is not simply an experience of difference, but of inequality. [...] Women, blacks, and people of most of the non-West have been historically constituted as others in the major political systems of difference on which the unequal world of modern capitalism has depended. (Ibid.)

I propose that, similar to women and other “others,” children or adolescents equally belong to this list of those who have been “other to a dominant self.” Either because children are often equated with women and remain in the realm of the home, as the site of a nurturing environment, or youths and adolescents are possibly studied as members of a counterculture, subculture, or youth movement, in opposition to “the man,” they are relegated to being identified as the other, often lacking any representation within scholarship or government. Although I do not believe age-ism to contain similar contestations present in sexism and racism, adolescents still can be considered as others who have suffered or are influenced by power structures in society.

By acknowledging the issue of inequality in this study, I hope to show how a marginalized community can be taken seriously while showing the different ways they contribute to dialogues about music and exchange. It would be ignorant to claim that this study will “let the children’s voices be heard,” but I believe that my being a young scholar worked to my advantage. As a young scholar and ICE member subject to many of the rules that applied to my students, I also became an “other to a dominant self” within academia and the hierarchy of the BLFAC International Exchange Program. Although not a direct member of the generation of my students, I was able to relate to them better than if I were twenty years older. At the time of the tour, I was five years older than the most senior members, and was only ten years older than the youngest members. Over a year later, three age groups from the tour have already begun college and I now have the opportunity to advise them on college-age matters.

My second point concerning inequality and power correlates with my role as a counselor. Expanding the participant/observer dichotomy, I must add “disciplinarian” to

this duality. Despite being close in age to ICE members and sharing the same experiences as them, my role as a staff member placed our interactions in a clear relationship of power. To better understand this power relationship, my responsibilities as a Blue Lake Staff member must be explicated.

Meant to maintain a positive environment and experience for all, each International Exchange staff member must work to accomplish the goals and objectives of the International Exchange Program. Quoting from the staff handbook, staff must:

- Serve as role models for campers by demonstrating fairness, respect of persons, respect of property, and by exemplifying the expectations of the Blue Lake International Exchange Program.
- Provide a warm caring environment that nurtures self-respect and develops healthful [*sic*], interpersonal relationships.
- Recognize, serve, and evaluate the individual needs and progress of each camper.
- Place high priority on their role as members of the Blue Lake International Exchange Program leadership team and the responsibility of preparing students for their role as goodwill ambassadors. (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 2)

While I did cultivate friendships with ICE students, my responsibilities to adhere to BLFAC goals, objectives, and rules required me to utilize leadership skills intended to correct and shape the behavior of students. Further qualifications for International Staff members include having the ability to “relate to and guide young people while maintaining their respect,” setting “an excellent example for students through exceptional behavior and appearance,” and remaining “positive, pleasant, enthusiastic, well organized and self-motivated” throughout the entire international exchange (*Addendum* 2001, 5). My presence as a staff member was clearly intended to transform how students felt and experienced the tour, therefore reflecting additional power as someone who had to positively enhance and alter each camper’s unique understanding of our time in the United States and Europe.

Keeping these other duties in mind, some duties required daily action on my part to keep the tour running smoothly, adding to the many ways my words and actions dictated ICE members' behaviors. While in Michigan, I was instructed to "maintain excellent behavior and [a] neat appearance" of ICE members, "maintain care, supervision, control and discipline" of ICE students, "assist with the orientation and preparation of students during [...] rehearsals," "supervise cabin duties and behavior in cabins" while at BLFAC, and "supervise [...] table manners during meals" at the dining hall (Ibid.). While in Europe I was to assist host families with problems they had with students, to the extent that I might be asked to be housed with problem students during the tour, or, in extreme cases, accompany expelled students home to the U.S.

My complex position as an insider with disciplinary authority may have intimidated students and caused some to refrain from openly sharing their thoughts and feelings with me. Because they were familiar with the behavior expectations of the camp and the narratives surrounding the values of the tour, students might have provided answers to interview questions that they thought were appropriate within that context and that spoke specifically to the goals of this project. The problem of eliciting comments from informants that are untainted by any ethnographer's influence, however, is difficult and not unique to this situation. The intricacies of this study, particularly as they relate to my role placed within the hierarchy of Blue Lake, speak to similar hierarchies all ethnographers face, as scholars must answer to the objectives of funding institutions, governments, non-governmental organizations, and their own research agenda. Informants may be aware of the benefits associated with providing fieldworkers the

answers they want to hear; these benefits might include additional access to financial or material goods or basking in the preferential treatment of the fieldworker. Students generally did not share sensitive material with me that would have compromised their or our relationship with the camp, and my role as a staff member primarily played out as acting as a positive example for students, maintaining optimistic attitudes and offering a different perspective on matters ICE faced together.

During fieldwork, I was always aware of my own capability to alter and shape my students' perceptions of their experiences, but I tried to use interview time with students as moments when we could both learn from each other. I also shared my own take on experiences we had shared to elicit a response where they thought about my perspective as a staff member, college student, and co-member in the choir. For my inquiries to be seen in the least intrusive light, I emphasized to ICE members and their parents that my first priority was fulfilling responsibilities as a counselor. To further clarify my role as ethnographer and counselor, I included language in consent forms that explicated these dual roles as well as the possible "risks" associated with participating in ICE and in my project:

Though traveling and singing in Europe together is an exciting and positive opportunity for all involved in ICE, sometimes the experiences may be emotionally, physically, or mentally taxing. As a counselor and ICE staff member this summer, my job is first to help your child when he or she faces these challenges. The risks to participating in any group or interview activities are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Again, looking after each person's well-being is my first and primary concern for all ICE members. (Parental Consent Form 2008)

On documents for student participants, I expanded on the benefits of how working with me in my project would be positive for them, specifically that "this research will help [them] to think about [their] experiences and create new ideas about different music



and cultures. Even as adolescents, [they] could contribute to scholarship about music, culture, and international exchange by sharing [their] thoughts during ICE's tour" (Adolescent Informed Assent Document 2008). Prioritizing the maintenance of Blue Lake's ideals for the International Choral Ensemble clearly affected how I carried out fieldwork, and my multiple roles, as an ethnographer and disciplinarian, all contributed to this ethnography. Undertaking a study where the ethnographer can be strongly perceived as an insider adds to Abu-Lughod's suggestion of writing against culture, and follows Gaunt's work, as she states, "While objective distance always enters into scholarly research (particularly in the writing up of data), we must allow the insider-to-insider experience to become a viable dimension of scholarly research" (Gaunt 1997, 18). As this research highlights this insider-insider dimension, it offers the additional element of an insider as authority figure, one who actively participated in all areas of the community.

### 2.3. BLUE LAKE FINE ARTS CAMP

Adding to the awareness of what my role within Blue Lake's International Exchange Program entailed, a thorough account of the place of BLFAC is necessary to situate ICE, as its members stem from the summer camp tradition and our formation began at camp. Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp attracts fine arts students throughout the Midwest and hosts a select number of campers from exchange communities in Europe. BLFAC was created in 1963 by Fritz Stansell. Inspired by his grandfather's piano camp in Wisconsin, Stansell and his close family and friends helped to establish an "internationally recognized summer school of the arts" (2007, 3). The first campers arrived in 1966, and by 1970, Blue Lake sent its first international group of young musicians to Western Europe. Despite a perceived source of competition between Blue

Lake and Interlochen, a similar youth music camp, Stansell recalls the need of a second Michigan arts camp, and that during the camp's earliest years, "each succeeding season saw amazing enrollment growth. [...] It seemed that no matter what we did, and no matter how many mistakes we made, our enrollment soared" (Ibid., 49). Stansell's wife, Gretchen, started the International Exchange component of Blue Lake and currently runs the program. Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp has served over three hundred thousand students since its creation (Ibid., 2).

Blue Lake is located near Muskegon, Michigan, in Manistee National Forest, and each summer the camp welcomes band, orchestra, choir, piano, art, theater and ballet students, in addition to hosting a young violinist's camp and renting the facilities for area high school marching band camps. The four main summer sessions last for eleven days, and students are divided into units. Each unit contains six cabins, and each cabin houses approximately twelve students. These cabins become each camper's home away from home; supervision is provided by a college-age counselor who looks after the well-being of the student as well as social activities in each camp unit. Music, dance and theater rehearsals, as well as art facilities, are situated throughout the landscape of the boys' and girls' sides of camp.

Blue Lake summer sessions function like well-oiled machines. Staff members spend the entire summer living at Blue Lake; their time is divided by work assignments throughout the camp supervising campers from sunrise to lights out. Stansell boasts that

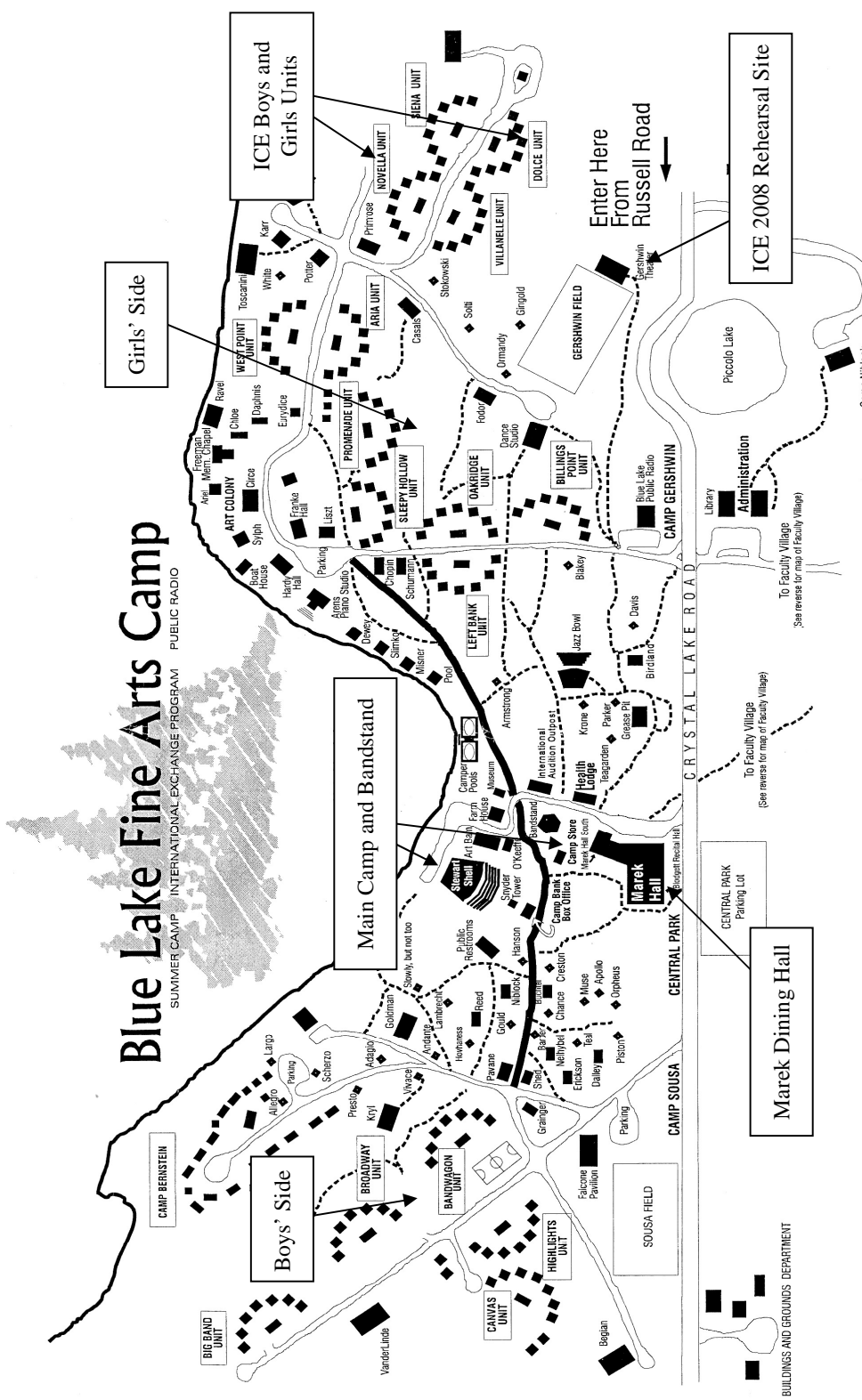
in the past 12 years our counseling staff selection and orientation has become thoroughly professional. [...] Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp has developed an excellent method of screening, hiring, training and supervising the counseling staff. Consequently, the BLFAC Counseling Program has earned a reputation of being one of the finest in the State of Michigan. (Ibid., 64)

Counseling staff responsibilities are substantial and include the prodigious task of attending to campers' needs twenty-four hours a day.

Faculty serve for one or two sessions each summer and come from across the country to work at Blue Lake. Faculty act as the primary contact for campers in each artistic area of the camp. Situated in "Faculty Village," faculty only spend rehearsals and some concerts with campers; otherwise they live across from main camp and have meals at their own cafeteria.

Blue Lake campers come mostly from Michigan and neighboring states. Two sessions are for middle school students, two for high school students, and a camp for younger musicians takes place during all sessions. Blue Lake does not require auditions for acceptance at summer camp, but campers audition once they arrive for placement in musical ensembles. Girls outnumber boys nearly two to one; boys have six units, and girls have eleven units, each consisting of up to seventy-two campers. Campers eat all meals together in the large cafeteria that holds the fifteen-hundred campers who visit each session. Recreational activities are provided during the campers' free periods, and popular pursuits during these times include swimming at the pool, relaxing at the beach on the lake, and meeting friends on Main Camp for refreshments at the camp store. Most evening events take place at the main band shell or other performing venues on camp, and concerts are open to the public and are often broadcasted live on Blue Lake's radio station.

Physically, the camp is clearly divided into Main Camp, girls' side, and boys' side, and this organization matches many other camp practices. During meals, boys' units and girls' units eat on opposite sides of the dining hall. Concerts at the band shell are also



segregated. For choir students, even rehearsals are divided by sex; often the tenors and basses are flanked on either side by the sopranos and altos. The Health Lodge has two separate lines for campers needing medications. Girls are not allowed on boys' side, and vice versa, except during rehearsals at practice facilities located on the opposite side of camp. Main camp, the recreation field, and the swimming pool serve as the only neutral zones where all campers can visit together during free periods and in between rehearsals.

Each camper's day follows the same schedule with few variations. Only on the camp's middle Sunday can parents visit and are able to take their kids off-camp for a few hours in the evening. Wake-up is 6:00 a.m., and campers scramble for showers. Cabins include campers from all majors; after breakfast everyone heads off to his or her music or other artistic major. For choir campers, they attend large choir rehearsals, sectionals and smaller groups where faculty members work closely with each student. Choir students have the option of selecting a minor at camp, such as music theory or theater, and the highest-ranked campers are invited to join an advanced chamber choir. In addition to evening concerts, campers attend events intended specifically for their majors. Other evening highlights include the camper dance, the carnival during middle school weeks, and pizza night when different units travel to other units for dinner. At the beginning of the summer, lights out, around 10:00 p.m., often occurs when the night sky is still light due to Michigan's northern placement. One of Blue Lake's signature symbols (and an area of consternation for counselors, parents, and staff) is the light blue uniform. Everyone on camp, from the faculty and support staff to the campers, is required to wear the prescribed uniform, which includes a light blue polo, jeans that are darker than the

shirt, closed-toed shoes, white socks, and a badge. Blue Lake has been a uniformed camp since its inception. Fritz Stansell recalls that,

at [that] time, I argued strenuously against the idea of a uniformed camp, but gave in to the persuasive arguments of my wife, Gretchen. Many years later I would finally realize that most of the arguments she put forward at that time for camper and staff uniforms were not only valid, but probably a significant part of the early success of Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. The major turning point on this question for me was one day in the mid 1980s while meeting with a group of about ten African-American Blue Lake faculty members. They were emphatic that a uniformed camp was not only justified, but essential for BLFAC to be able to draw students from a wide cross section of society. Without uniforms, competitive dressing was inevitable. (Ibid., 52-53)

The equalizing power of the BLFAC uniform helps many students from different economic backgrounds to focus on their activities and friendships at camp.

In addition to standardizing the outward appearance of Blue Lakers, uniforms also affect bodily behavior and bring order in an area where “appropriate” clothing may have as many manifestations as campers. The African-American Blue Lake faculty from Stansell’s quotation might agree with Paul Connerton, as he acknowledges the significance of a shift in clothing styles during the late eighteenth century French revolutionary period. Connerton states that “[New styles of clothing] mark the attempt to establish a new set of typical *bodily practices*” (1989, 10). During the first of two distinct clothing style periods,

clothes became uniforms. The culotte of simple cut and the absence of adornments were emblematic of the desire to eliminate social barriers in the striving for equality: by making the body neutral, citizens were to be free to deal with one another without the intrusion of differences in social status. (Ibid.)

This equality easily contributed to my feeling comfortable at Blue Lake as I interacted with campers, counselors, and faculty. While I was not looking forward to wearing the same clothing every day during my first summer as a camp counselor, I immediately felt

uncomfortable my first meal and night at camp because I stood out wearing my civilian clothes.

Despite the constant sea of blue worn by students, however, many bring their own flair to adorn their uniforms. Badges turn into rainbows of stickers and doodles, shoes come in all closed-toed styles and colors, belts sparkle, and girls wear jewelry, headbands, and other accessories to break up the blue. An area of frequent conflict, staff members often discipline campers concerning their uniforms, requiring them to tuck in their shirts, button their bottom buttons, and to put on their badge. Students in violation of the dress code can be sent back to their units to amend their outfits when necessary.

Each summer session comes to a close on Sunday, when parents and friends attend the concerts and performances that serve as the culmination of the summer camp experience and showcase what the students have learned and accomplished in eleven days. At this point parents are able to witness their child's success, seeing how a short amount of time can affect young artistic minds and how valuable the experience can be for their children, as also noted in the journal *Teaching Music*: "The one thing summer camps have in common is that they are usually short and intense and therefore can be formative experiences for students at every level" (Harlow, Horman, and Machover 1997, 31). The effectiveness of the camp can be accessed by the artistic and personal accomplishments of campers.

#### 2.4. THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Though Blue Lake's first international exchange was in 1970, the seeds for such a trip were sown much earlier. After volunteering at a local "Youth For Understanding" chapter in Michigan, the Stansells traveled to Europe serving as YFU staff for a group of

American teenagers during the summer of 1963. After their experience, Fritz and Gretchen learned that “it is truly a pleasure to travel with young people. They are fun, high-spirited and noisy, but amazingly flexible. Faced with adversity, they reacted with unexpected maturity” (Stansell 2007, 111). Greatly affected by youth international exchange and the home-stay experience, Gretchen knew early on that a similar program would be an integral part of BLFAC.

The first exchange in 1970 firmly established the high expectations and behavior standards of Blue Lake students. The first group abroad was dealing with a world attitude similar to that during the 2000s, in that “they were about to represent America as goodwill ambassadors in Europe at a time when America’s motives in Southeast Asia were being questioned all over the world” (Ibid., 116). All Blue Lake International Exchange students “were to be of the best behaved and most respectful goodwill ambassadors America could send,” and each student and parent signed a behavior pledge agreeing “not to smoke, drink alcohol, possess or use illegal drugs; adhere to specified hair length and style; wear the uniform as it should be properly worn; be friendly and grateful for hospitality offered by host families; exhibit excellent table manners and generally, ‘Look Neat, Behave Well, and Perform Well’” (Ibid., 117). The program is still rooted on the following goal: “the promotion of goodwill, understanding, friendship and peace through young people, cultural exchange and the universal language of music” (Ibid., 121).

During each session of camp, Blue Lake’s full-time International Exchange staff advertise the program and conduct auditions and interviews for the international ensembles that will be traveling the following summer. Besides the recorded audition



where campers play or sing for the international staff and the audition/application form, decisions concerning admittance to these exchanges are also contingent upon each camper's character evaluation completed by their cabin counselor, and an artistic evaluation completed by the camper's faculty sectional leader. If campers complete these requirements and score well, they could be notified of their acceptance before the current summer is over. If an international ensemble is short on participants, then non-Blue Lake students may be invited to audition for those positions.

The International Exchange Program fills instrumental and vocal positions in various ensembles that tour for three weeks the following summer. In alternating years, a ballet ensemble and adult band join the International Youth Symphony Orchestra, International Choral Ensemble, Northern Winds, Southern Winds, and Jazz Band.<sup>2</sup> Each ensemble is chaperoned by a director and his/her staff, consisting of college-age students or recent graduates who play dual roles as musicians, participating in the ensembles, and serving as counselors, gift exchangers, health staff, and equipment detail. Each summer 350 students and staff travel to Europe, visiting at least seven European communities each.

Because these ensembles take campers from different camp sessions, many participants do not know each other before international rehearsals begin. The group dynamic changes significantly from the environment members experience during main camp to their time as part of the international program. The variations from summer sessions warrant mention because they strongly affect the characteristics of the

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<sup>2</sup> The number of international groups for summer 2010 has expanded. This year's ensembles include a String Orchestra, Ballet Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Northern and Southern Winds, an Elizabethan Study Group (Theater students), Jazz Orchestra, and a Choir and String Orchestra, which will be touring together and performing a major choral/orchestral work ("Staff Application Form for the 2010 Tours" 2009, 2-3).

international ensembles and the sense of community in each of the groups. First, the International Exchange campers are chosen from some of the most talented of the previous summers' sessions. The environment at camp with international exchange campers is entirely different. It is emphasized that members of international ensembles were particularly chosen for this opportunity, having the privilege to represent Blue Lake and the United States abroad by meeting the "musical and high citizenship standards of the program" (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 4). The responsibility of excellence is strengthened by how this international exchange is perceived by European hosts. In a flyer handed out during camp rehearsals, Blue Lake staff explain that campers "were selected to represent the best of our American youth. In many ways, the country and family you will live with for a short time will think of all Americans as they think of you. The impression you leave with your families is crucial to successful tours now and in the future" ("Some Things to Think About..."). Only the most talented students, with equal amounts of integrity, have the opportunity to tour with Blue Lake international groups, and their responsibility to themselves, each other, the camp, and the U.S. is constantly emphasized during pre-tour preparations.

In addition to the difference in student caliber, the chances of pre-existing close friendships between campers in the same ensemble are less likely. Summer session campers have the opportunity to be placed with their friends in the same cabin or unit if they send in their camp application at the same time. In contrast, fewer summer camp friends join an international ensemble together. Even close friendships from camp, which often form in cabins or units, do not transfer to the international program because members of the same ensembles often live in different cabins and units scattered across

the camp, and summer campers spend most of their time together in their units and during meals. International campers, however, often find they vaguely remember each other in discovering that they attended the same camp session the previous summer.

In contrast to strict camp boundaries delineated by sex, international campers have more freedom. International campers from the same group sit next to whomever they please at meals during May Weekend and June Intensive Week. Additionally, the division of boys' and girls' sides of camp disappears. After the opening of the new theater facility on the girls' side of camp, the International Choral Ensemble has been staying in "Back Forty" units; boys are located diagonally across the road from the girls' unit in contrast to the mile-long hike boys would normally endure during summer sessions to reach the theater. The physical limits of the International Choral Ensemble are also smaller than the boundaries of regular summer session campers. The rehearsal space sits behind the international camper girls' unit, and other than the walk to main camp for meals, snacks, and swimming, the living sphere for the ensemble is much smaller. Everyone in the group walks to meals, rehearsals, and evening activities together. Each cabin consists only of choir members, and group practice is more convenient, as everyone remains in close proximity to one another. Close friendships and relationships develop easily as ICE members spend most of their waking and sleeping hours together.

Although maintaining a grueling schedule of practicing, sleeping, eating, napping and then practicing again wears on International Exchange Program campers, the reward at the end of their time at camp is much more exciting and anticipated. Each ensemble gives a concluding concert for friends and family the night before departure, similar to

the regular summer camp, but the most exciting component of the program begins once everyone steps on to their international flight to Europe.

## 2.5. ICE 2008 PERSONNEL

With one exception, all ICE 2008 members were campers the previous summer. The entire group consisted of seventy-six individuals, including the conductor, accompanist/assistant conductor, and three counselors. Student personnel consisted of seventy-one members, and only one student was part of the previous year's choir. The youngest members of the group were thirteen years old at the time of the tour, and several students were already nineteen years old, with one student having already completed a year of college. The average age of the group, excluding the adult staff, was 15.5, the median was 16, and the mode was 15. Nearly all participants were from Michigan or nearby Midwestern states.

As is the case in most middle school and high school choir ensembles, the girls outnumbered boys over four to one. The distribution for each part was: thirty sopranos, twenty-eight altos, seven tenors, six basses. The two other counselors and I sang with the group, thus adding an alto, soprano, and bass voice to the group. It is common that the international program advertises positions for male voices in ICE on the Blue Lake website because of the disproportionality of the choir. The difficulty level of the music ICE performs necessitates as even a balance as possible of all voice parts, especially since some pieces divide the soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts in half or thirds. The maximum number of choir participants is seventy-three, and it appears that these spaces are filled, regardless of sex, to ensure that the best have the opportunity to participate.

Although the majority of students come from affluent socio-economic backgrounds, allowing them to take a five-thousand dollar trip to Europe, several students looked to other sources of funding to make the trip a reality. Some students received scholarships from their schools or from Blue Lake. As an ICE camper, the other female staff member recalled earning a scholarship from her high school in 2002, which made the international tour possible for her (Interview, June 14, 2008<sup>3</sup>). Many students worked to contribute to the cost of the trip or earned their own spending money, either by taking on multiple jobs, from refereeing sports to babysitting, or doing fundraisers, like singing for different groups or selling baked goods. Some students whose parents paid for the trip even expressed a desire to pay their parents back for the trip.

Demographically, the group was very homogeneous. While some students had ties to other countries or nationalities, all members possessed United States passports. The majority were Caucasian, with four African-American students. Several students shared their cultural backgrounds with me; a few had close ties to Europe, including members with relatives from Poland and Germany.

As a means to get to know the students, during Intensive Week and interviews throughout the tour, I asked students what kind of music they liked, what they thought about the tour music, and what their reasons were for joining ICE. Their answers concerning music ran the gamut of styles and genres, and most emphasized the important role that music plays in their lives.

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<sup>3</sup> All interviews are listed without the name(s) of the interviewees so as to protect the identities of ICE participants.

## 2.6. PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES

Before leaving for Europe, ICE 2008 devoted thousands of hours individually and together preparing and rehearsing for the summer program. Members had twenty-four songs to learn and memorize for the tour, and much time was dedicated to mastering Schubert's Mass in G, which the group did not perform on the European tour but performed with the Blue Lake International Youth Symphony Orchestra at a concert in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the end of July.

The first choir rehearsal was during the day on November 11, 2007, at the camp. At this first meeting, students received their music, parents gathered information from Blue Lake staff, their questions were answered, uniforms were ordered, and the first read-through occurred. Because of my previous experience with ICE, I was not required to attend the November or April rehearsals. Since several students joined ICE 2008 later the following spring, it is unlikely that the entire ensemble was present, especially considering that some members had conflicts with the date and were also unable to attend. With the day beginning at 8:30 a.m., ending at 4:30 p.m., and packed with nearly six hours of rehearsal, this introduction to the music and expectations for the tour were surely overwhelming.

To aid in learning the music, the director created and disseminated rehearsal CDs for students, including an accompaniment and each student's respective voice part. This practice device contributed significantly to learning the music. I did not receive a practice CD and only learned of its existence later in May when students were listening to it on their iPods in between rehearsals. Blue Lake staff encouraged ensemble members to take individual responsibility for learning the music. They further suggested that students

work on the music with their private music instructor, and for those students not currently taking private lessons, they recommended beginning them.

Over five months later, the international groups met for another day rehearsal on April 20, 2008. Following a similar rehearsal schedule as in November, parents also picked up uniforms, placed orders for group and individual photos, and presented their children's suitcases to ensure that they met size limitations. Shortly before the end of day, each group gave a short performance for parents, their first performance of many more to come.

After completing the eight-hour drive from St. Louis to Twin Lake, Michigan, on May 15, I moved into my cabin in preparation for May Weekend and early staff meetings the following day. Beginning the day in our Blue Lake blues, I and the two other ICE counselors participated in these meetings, completing activities before campers arrived that evening. Our main activity consisted of imagining what expectations students, parents, staff members, host families, and the Blue Lake administration might have for the trip. Immediately I had to begin negotiating how this project would work alongside and complement these expectations, especially as ICE parents prepared to send their children off to unknown lands.

Similar to the previous two meetings, the weekend was packed with rehearsals and orientations. We rehearsed for almost fifteen hours from Friday night through Sunday afternoon, with the goal of making it through the entire tour repertoire. The director had to assess where the group stood and decide which songs or parts of songs the group was still struggling with, while sharpening enough pieces to present to parents who were returning Sunday to pick up their children. Almost all ICE members were still in

school, many were preparing for finals and graduation, and it seemed that the responsibilities outside of camp remained on the minds of everyone. I primarily worked to collect permission forms from students and parents and log this information so that June Intensive Week could be devoted to getting to know the members and learning the music.

## 2.7. JUNE INTENSIVE WEEK

A Day in the Life of a Blue Laker at Intensive Week:

6:00 a.m.	Wake-up call
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00-11:50 a.m.	Group and sectional rehearsals, plus language instruction
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:40 p.m.	All international students and staff rehearse “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” in Marek Dining Hall
1:15-2:15 p.m.	Nap/Rest time
2:30-4:45 p.m.	Group and sectional rehearsals, announcements, and orientation
5:00 p.m.	Recreation/Swimming
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00-9:30 p.m.	Group rehearsals, then short orientation session
10:30 p.m.	Lights out

The grueling rehearsal schedule during June Intensive Week (June 6-14) takes its toll on all participants. Ensembles practiced for up to seven and a half hours each day, which for ICE members required constant care and attention to personal health and throat conditions. (Several participants, myself included, lost their voice for periods during the week, and the term “vocal rest” was thrown around as a serious commandment for choir members who needed to recover in order to be at their best during the tour.) Although the group was missing members periodically during the week, due to graduations and final exams, among others, the choir faced its first large obstacle to becoming a community:



living together and doing everything together, twenty-four hours a day, for eight days straight.

As a staff member, my week was devoted to helping campers get to meals and rehearsals on time in proper uniform protocol, packaging gifts Blue Lake was giving to our host communities and chairpersons, preparing the equipment manifest for Air France representatives, learning and memorizing all tour music, conducting alto sectionals, teaching basic German to ICE and the ballet ensemble, leading the ballet in learning “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” (the traditional song all international ensembles sing to their host families when leaving), and answering any and all questions members had about Europe, camp policies, appropriate suitcase size, shorts length, and all other topics that came up.

As a neophyte ethnographer, I was learning that my ideal expectations of conducting interviews and making detailed notes during the week were unrealistic. I found that, in between my commitments to rehearsals and providing supervision of campers, my time was dedicated to taking care of some basic personal needs, like hygiene, adequate rest, and time away from seventy-one middle school and high school students in order to maintain personal sanity. Therefore, many of the thoughts I gathered from ICE members about their Intensive Week experiences stem from conversations that took place in Europe. Although this arrangement was not ideal, I found that some students still had not met everyone in the group, leaving space for continued observance of the community’s formation beyond camp. The rapport I built with students during Intensive Week, something which helped students feel comfortable with me, could easily have been compromised if I had actively pursued students, either by conducting

interviews when I and others had not yet felt situated with the camp environment, or by monopolizing students' time and taking away from their practice, rehearsal, or rest periods.

Many members thought of Intensive Week as a learning experience. Some students mentioned that they learned the importance of being on time, drinking lots of water, and not singing during non-rehearsal times, which was more difficult for some members than others. One girl in particular offered that Intensive Week helped teach her how to make friends and improved her social skills, both crucial abilities for ICE members before interacting with their new-found European families. One student, one of the oldest members, described the amount of work necessary for the week:

I think [Intensive Week] kind of teaches you that you have to, you know, how to really buckle down and work intensively on something because we put A LOT, I mean, we put a lot of hours into these songs during that week, and I don't think I've ever focused so much on one thing for so long. Just because it doesn't really happen in other times, you know, you have lots of things to work on at once...but during Intensive Week you only had thirty songs to memorize. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

While the members of ICE 2008 were getting to know each other, the procedures and atmosphere of rehearsal time, and the methodology of the director, led to the creation of a coherent performing machine/choir. Wesley Berg's study on Mennonite choral singing in Russia highlights the importance of the choir leader. Writing about Kornelius Neufeld, a choral singing pioneer in these regions, Berg states, "Choral singing may be a communal activity, but dedicated and skillful leadership is in most cases crucial to its success," and in many ways, the story of ICE 2008 is similarly "a vivid illustration of how a dedicated leader surrounded by equally dedicated singers can develop a vibrant choral music life even in less than ideal circumstances" (2006, 71).

In *Heartland Excursions*, Bruno Nettl describes how conductors and the conducted can represent hierarchical structures; his military metaphor for the orchestra also applies to ICE:

[t]he conductor is the general, the ‘baton’ of military origin. The conductor gets credit for victories, is listed on the album cover, takes bows, but is not heard and so risks little. The occupants of the first chairs are officers who have a certain amount of authority over their troops, whose main task is to march—that is, bow and finger—in unison, mainly for the appearance of discipline. (Nettl 1995, 35)

For this choir, the director certainly was the figurehead of the ensemble; his biography was listed in all programs, and his contributions to performances consisted of welcoming remarks at the beginning of each concert. ICE did not have first chair musicians, but the staff easily filled this role, standing in as the sergeants under the general and directing all the petty officers. This hierarchical system, however, does not fully represent the depth of direction and meaning for ICE, and further approaches to the role of the conductor highlight the richness of the ICE community during Intensive Week and beyond.

To demonstrate how the director developed a rapport with choir members and commanded respect from the group, I reference several events and student comments. Even before arrival in June, the conductor sent a letter to parents and students addressing the accomplishments of May weekend and plans for June rehearsals. Quoting from this letter, “I’m still flying on the energy we had for May weekend. [...] I continue to be impressed with your attitudes and your hard work. OK – now it gets tougher. You simply have to come to Intensive Week well prepared” (Letter, May 30, 2008). Included in this communication was a rigorous schedule with a list of pieces to be reviewed and memorized during the first four days of the week. Friday through Monday rehearsals were focused on the memorization of six to seven songs by the end of each day. With few

to no songs memorized after May Weekend, these musical expectations were quite daunting, particularly since the repertoire included many *a cappella* works and several in foreign languages. This music had to fulfill the musical expectations set by the camp staff:

It is our desire to present music that is challenging and contains a variety of styles, as well as a good representation of the best in American music. These programs should also be entertaining to audiences that are comprised mostly of non-musicians. This requires the selections to be both familiar and pleasant to listen to for the first time. (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 6)

Most selections chosen by the director accomplish these goals nicely; the repertoire showcases a variety of American styles and genres, including pop hits, gospels, spirituals, folksongs, country, and works by prominent contemporary choral composers. (See Appendix A)

Perhaps the largest conflict and most tension-filled rehearsal occurred on Saturday, the second day of Intensive Week. After practicing the piece “Voice Dance,” by Greg Jasperse, the group, and more specifically, the second alto section, lost their place during the evening run-through and clearly showed that they did not have the song memorized. The severity of such an offense to the entire choir and the director, in particular, was also complicated by my presence. First, most rehearsals took place with each voice part seated together, with each section divided into firsts and seconds. I normally sat in between the two alto sections, but when I grew restless or had not yet memorized a piece while the rest of the group worked without music, I took advantage of my staff member status and stood behind the altos, working with the music or taking a short singing break. That evening we were working on the piece arranged by vocal part in circles, in order to more easily listen to one’s own part, and the altos had the added

difficulty of being the only voice part that was consistently split into two. We second altos were mostly not confident on our part, but the crisis moment occurred around measure thirty-four (measure twenty-two in Example 2.1. below) when the rest of the group modulated to G flat major, and we tried unsuccessfully to continue in E flat major.

Although not one of the most difficult ICE songs, this piece led to an alto section misstep because of the response to losing their place and not being able to recover. As part of the alto circle, I believe the other singers were hoping to rely on someone who had the piece memorized, and many looked to me to carry the section. I, however, had not memorized the piece and was personally struggling with getting the vocables text straight, let alone the notes. When I stopped singing, others stopped as well, and their nonchalant attitude about the mistake helped to provoke a severe critique from the director. He did not hide his disappointment; “Voice Dance” was placed with other songs we had not yet mastered, and the piece faced being cut from the program altogether. I felt that the choir knew that they had let their leader down, who they had grown to greatly respect, and some members were visibly distressed or crying because of the harsh reprimand. Because of this song’s difficult beginnings, we worked the rest of the week to perfect the piece, get it back into the program, and not let the conductor down again. I say “we” because I was equally affected by the incident and absorbed some personal responsibility. Talking with the director afterwards, he was not personally upset with me at all and emphasized the importance of being strict with students early on, and even that an appropriately timed upsurge works to establish respect and reach high musical and performing expectations.

Example 2.1. Excerpt from “Voice Dance,” measures 1-41

*Smoothly* ♩ = ca. 64  
*f*

SOPRANO  
Ba va da do way ya da da do way ya da da ay ah ba va da dan do way ya da dan do

ALTO  
*f* *div.*  
Da do way ya da da way ya da da ay ah ah va da da way ya da

TENOR  
*f* *div.*  
Do way ya da da way ya da ay ya dan do wah da da way ya da

BASS  
*f*  
Ba ya da da way ya da ay ah ba va da dan da ya do way ya da

7 *mf* *cresc.*  
S. way ya da va day ah zing oh ah da zing oh ah ya dan do way

A. *mf* *unis. cresc.*  
way ya da ya zing oh ah da zing oh ah da dee ya dan do wah day

T. *unis.* *f* *cresc.*  
way ya da va day ah ba va day ah da oo way ba va day ah da yah ya ah wah day

B. *mf* *cresc.*  
way ya da va day ah zing oh ah da zing oh ah ya da

14 *f*  
S. yah da ay ya da da va do way ay yah ya da da do way  
da va do *f* yah

A. ya da da ay ya da da oo way ay ba va da do way ya da da way

T. *unis.*  
ya da ya da da oo way va dan da yah da yah da do way ya da da way  
yah do way ya da da

B. *f*  
ya va da va day ya da da oo way ya da day yah way

### Example 2.1. Continued

19 2. *f*

S. yah da day ya da da va do way ay *f* yah ya da da do way

A. ya da da day ya da da oo way ay *f* yah ha va da do way ya da da way

T. 8 ya da da ya da da oo way va dan da ya *f* yah da do way ya da da way

B. ya va da va day ya da da oo way ya da day *f* yah do way ya da da way

24 *mf*

S. ya da da ay ah ba va da dan do way ya da dan do way ya da va day ah ba va

A. ya da da ay ah ah va da da way ya da way ya da ah

T. 8 ya da ay ya dan do wah da da way ya da way ya da va day ah

B. ya da ay ah ba va da dan da ya do way ya da way ya da va day ah

After arriving in Europe, I asked students about what they thought of Intensive Week, and this moment of crisis resonated with them as well. Describing the first few days, one member stated: “You know, the first night, like Friday night and Saturday, we were NOT doing well, like we weren’t doing well, and then we got [to rehearsals] on Sunday and everything just started to click and [learning the music] started to go a lot faster and it was rewarding and it was really fun” (Interview, June 16, 2008).

Instead of any negative opinions about the strict strategies of the director early in the week, ICE members even saw these techniques as positive. I posed the following

question to one group of students: “So did you guys learn anything from our time at Intensive Week before leaving for Europe, is there anything that stood out that was hard, or easy, or annoying, or wonderful...?” After one student contributed her thoughts about the director: “One thing, like, I thought Mr. White<sup>4</sup>, was cool before, but now he’s like, really amazing...,” the conversation turned toward the specific “Voice Dance” incident.

Member 1: I definitely, like, liked Mr. White’s, like, teaching techniques that I saw...

Member 2: He’s amazing, yes...

Member 1: ...like especially, like, threatening techniques, it worked really well even though they were harsh, ... but it worked for everyone and...

Member 3: Like when he cut “Voice Dance” Saturday.

[Others murmur agreement]

Member 1: And there’s nobody here who doesn’t like him, which is very surprising because there’s usually at least some negativity towards teachers. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

Although students may have had an incentive to give less than truthful answers because of my role as a staff member, answerable to the director, some students reported that they found that the director’s leadership techniques factored significantly in the determination of success for ICE 2008, not only musically. These students’ impressions might also indicate an employment of a survival mechanism response. As with any trying experience, such as the rehearsal moments encountered during Intensive Week, the tendency to focus on the positive and to reshape or forget the negative possibly was already being worked out in the memories of ICE members.

Amongst the serious moments, the group enjoyed a lot of funny moments together during Intensive Week. Ahlquist highlights the importance of human capital in the

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<sup>4</sup> All ICE members’ names have been altered to maintain anonymity.



*Chorus and Community* essays. As mentioned in her introduction, the typical representation of singers creating a “personality cult” around the conductor describes this Blue Lake situation well. Many ICE members sang the praises of the director, and one staff member commented that even during the summer 2009 season, the ICE 2008 director was identified by Blue Lake summer campers as their ideal choir session conductor (Interview, October 31, 2009). Interestingly, Intensive Week also featured moments of “collegial self-effacement” on the part of the director. Originating the first year I traveled with ICE, the director started the tradition of a “roasting” of the conductor, where students were invited to impersonate him. The rehearsal schedule sent out in May by the director even reveals the possibility of this impersonation contest. With this in mind, the director and counselors reminded students to take notes on all the quirky behaviors of the director throughout the week in anticipation of this comedy night. ICE members even practiced their routines in their cabins so that the best cabin act would be chosen. The 2008 contest mostly featured the director’s positive and negative attention given to different sections, random gestures that would pop up in rehearsals, and fidgety movements, like switching from sitting, to leaning on, to moving the director’s stool. The director’s light-hearted nature and easy sense of humor helped students feel comfortable with the group as a whole at camp and in Europe. Becoming a father figure of sorts, the trust and friendship the director fostered with each member significantly contributed to how ICE became a community and felt like a community when interacting with others.

Overall, students and staff found Intensive Week to be a success. Other than the normal amounts of stress associated with such a demanding schedule, I enjoyed the week and thought the group was ready for Europe. Even the difficult moments receded in each

person's memory, and members, nearly two years later, look back fondly on this time.

Recently two members were exchanging greetings on a social networking site and mentioned Intensive Week:

Member 1: So, I just had a flashback from Intensive Week, and realize how much I miss you, ole friend.

Member 2: I loved Intensive Week. It has been a while since we have seen each other, this is true. How've you been? (Facebook, January 2010)

As the location of friendship and community formation, the extreme setting of Intensive Week, the techniques of a well-respected director, and the assistance of the staff all established a firm foundation for the packed international tour. After a brief foray and concert in northern Illinois, the group departed for Europe, armed with our traveling snacks from Blue Lake and heads filled with music to share with our gracious European hosts.

## CHAPTER 3

### TOUR

#### 3.1. THE INTERNATIONAL TOUR – INTRODUCTION

June 16 – June 19	St. Laurent-en-Grandvaux, France
June 19 – June 22	Emsdetten, Germany
June 22 – June 25	Syddjurs, Denmark
June 25 – June 28	Kellinghusen, Germany
June 28 – July 1	Calbe, Germany
July 1 – July 4	Bückebug, Germany
July 4 – July 7	Erps-Kwerps, Belgium

To demonstrate how the ICE choir became an ever more integrated community during the European tour, this chapter begins with how the group stood out in the European landscape, leading to how ICE was formally and informally assimilated into the communities we visited. Most first impressions made by the group on others occurred as soon as the sea of blue overtook the airplanes, rest stops, schools, and major cities that were all part of our itinerary. To better understand a typical city visit, the logistics of host family stays must be set. Then the role of music in these families and communities can show how they found commonalities with their American students and how ICE members engaged in the customs of the different cities visited. These sections draw from experiences in all the host communities visited, but the choir's fifth station was the apex of the tour, and the components of the visit featured a multiplicity of perspectives to be offered and investigated concerning the musical events of and visit from Blue Lake. Finally, our goodbyes to host communities show how our music again stood as a gift and thank-you to those who hosted us.

Figure 3.1. Map of European Host Communities



In addition to four concerts during Intensive Week and at the pre-tour location, ICE performed eighteen times in twenty-one days while in Europe, either alone, with other choirs, or with instrumental groups. Despite the lengthy rehearsals at Blue Lake, most host communities included rehearsal time in our schedule, particularly during the beginning of the tour. The large number of concerts versus the short amount of time the choir worked together completely reverses the norm most choristers experience. Instead of preparing a program for eight to sixteen weeks, culminating in a single performance, ICE condensed months of group rehearsals into less than two weeks, resulting in the opportunity to constantly re-present and rework the repertoire, learning from previous

mistakes and mastering the dynamics of performance. All of the hard work resulted in instant rewards, such as excited applause and repeated encores from European audiences. Stemming from the feelings originating during Intensive Week, the group became more in tune with one another and closer as a community, working ostensibly towards its goal of presenting the best of American music, youth, and ambassadorial goodwill.

### 3.2. WE STAND OUT AS A SEA OF BLUE

Before departing for Europe, ICE underwent its first forays into the larger population of Rockford, Illinois, as part of the group's pre-tour schedule. The first sea of blue, that is, all of us in our travel blues, took over a rest area on the border of Michigan and Indiana. With a group of tired singers, apprehensive about their first public concert and impending departure the following day, I wondered how this massive group of adolescents altered, or perhaps inconvenienced, those around us. The choir endured the test of obedience of the strict Blue Lake uniform rules when departing at O'Hare on June 15. As per protocol: "Students are to be in proper [travel] uniform anytime the group is together – and they should be sure their hair is combed, shirt tucked in, no gum, etc. – when leaving the bus or plane" (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 15). Leaving in the best of spirits and hygiene was easier in Chicago; students' uniforms were freshly laundered before leaving camp. After checking in nearly three hours before our flight, spending almost eight hours on the plane, and negotiating the complicated De Gaulle airport in Paris, our bus driver was a very welcome sight. In the seven hours it took to drive to our first host community, students slept and relaxed, and I began the first of many group interviews with students.

Figure 3.2. The Author Wearing the Blue Lake “Travel Blues”  
(Photo from Author’s Collection)



During our first real encounter in France, members needed to ready their uniforms before taking a rest stop lunch break. Similar to the stop in the United States, the French rest area was a liminal space between camp and host family. As a proto-interaction with Europeans, ICE swarmed the rest area cafeteria and bathroom with a deafening wave of laughter and conversation. This first chance for students to test out their new ambassadorial and language skills was problematic at best, and members of the group realized how the behavior of some could easily be equated with everyone, especially

since all were wearing the same thing. Some students emphasized that “We are a big group [...] it’s not our fault that we’re a big group and I think, to some extent, it’s hard to control just everything because nobody was talking really, really loud [...] but this many people talking at a regular level...” (Interview, June 16, 2008). Another student acknowledged that ICE was “loud and pretty obnoxious,” thus recognizing what others at the rest stop may have thought of this strange group wearing blues.

This early ICE/Europe experience highlights the formal responsibility of multiple actors when a group wears a uniform. The choir acted most powerfully as a community when everyone dressed alike, either loudly performing music or loudly interacting in other public settings, for people to enjoy or disdain, depending on the situation. With the name of the camp on our shirts, we were walking advertisements for Blue Lake. The uniform, however, also served the group well.

Choir members reiterated what several Blue Lake faculty stated about the benefits of a uniformed camp; some agreed that the ease and equalizing effect of the travel blues was a positive characteristic. Though perhaps not the most stylish uniforms, Europeans found the concert dress attractive. When asking about the uniforms, one ICE girl stated:

I think [the uniforms are] okay because it’s acknowledging that we’re all the same group and that we don’t have to be identified by, like, the different types of clothes we wear. [...] If we’re all together, we’re all the same and it’s just easier, then people don’t have to go around [thinking], “Oh, what do I have to wear today to look cute.” You just put it on and go. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

For those who did not want to think about clothing choices, the uniforms made the tour in Europe much easier on many levels. For example, when the group participated in large tourist outings, others could simply look for blue shirts and find their friends when scattered about urban areas.

During our visit in France and our first full day in Europe, we had the opportunity to cross the border into Switzerland and visit Geneva. All were excited to add another country to their country list. Once realizing that our first community was near Switzerland, one student hoped that she would be able to visit Switzerland and had her wish fulfilled. The group wore travel blues because the morning was spent together. One student's joy in wearing blues in Geneva again brings out how the uniform shaped the choir into a community:

But Switzerland, man, that was, that was incredible, like, I mean, I guess I was kind of like... it was really cool that they [Blue Lake staff?] would trust us enough to like, let us go on our own, like, in this big city, and like, in Geneva, and just let us, like, buy whatever we wanted. [...] It was just so much fun, and, like, the waterfall, like, that was really cool that we got to wear "civies" [civilian clothes] and all, [...] but in Geneva, it was kind of cool that we were all, like, identified with our little, like, blue polos and everything. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

This first outing to Geneva was certainly exciting for this student, and true to her word, students bought any number of strange, impractical, stylish, and fun items during their first visit to a major European city. When walking around the city center, I could not help but notice all of my students; in a practical sense, I wanted to assure that no one had been excluded, looked overwhelmed or appeared lost. It was comforting to be able to easily find other ICE members, interlaced among all the clothing shops, restaurants, and tourist stands.

The easily identifiable Blue Lake "blues" served many functional purposes during the tour. It allowed for group members to instantaneously feel connected to others who wore the same thing. Undoubtedly the uniform helped those who had not met everyone to recognize who was and was not in their community. This familiarity played out in three other personal experiences with Blue Lake.



First, after returning from Europe and performing with ICE members during our homecoming tour, I asked students what they missed the most about the tour. One student stated, “Being able to go through the town and being, like, ‘Hey, there’s a Blue Laker, there’s a Blue Laker, I know them.’ And now, it’s like, ‘Yeah, I know you, but it’s not in a cool way’” (Interview, July 29, 2008). The uniform certainly helped this student find his friends when traveling to different sites during the tour, first identifying those wearing the same thing as him, and also later as he and others quickly recognized the faces of other ICE members.

The following two moments of identifying with the Blue Lake uniform took place in 2006 and 2007. During the 2006 and 2008 tour, ICE visited the same small, picturesque town of Celle, Germany. When our schedule necessitated that we take extra time so as not to arrive at the next community early, the group would take longer breaks at rest stops or visit places such as this town. In 2006, I spent some time alone, wandering about the stores and markets in Celle, taking a break from all the students and stretching my legs. All ICE members were in their travel blues, of course, so it was simple to find my fellow group members. At one point I was startled by a German man who stopped me in the street. While I knew that people would notice a large group wearing the same clothing, I had not previously been stopped by anyone. This man seemed quite excited, as he explained that he knew of Blue Lake; he was a camper there in the 1970s. I was very surprised by his admission, and I was glad to have made a connection with someone who clearly shared an excitement about Blue Lake.

In 2007, I was unable to participate with Blue Lake as I was attending university in Freiburg. I did, however, travel to Heidelberg, Germany, for one of ICE 2007’s

concerts. I wanted to reconnect with the staff, all of whom I had previously met or worked with and wanted to hear how their group sounded. After listening to their rehearsal and visiting during a break before the concert, I accompanied the group to their concert site and sat with the group while their host community choir performed. This time, however, I was not part of the in-group. I felt slightly awkward during the concert, because I was wearing “civies,” sitting amongst a group of teenagers wearing white concert polos. I identified with ICE 2007, having had a similar experience and knowing several of the campers from the previous summer, but the lack of proper attire appeared as an unavoidable stumbling block to the European community. Even as I sat with ICE students who were not feeling well enough to perform, taking on the role of a counselor in some capacity, I could not be part of this group.

This last experience emphasized how important the uniform can be to create a feeling of belonging in the ICE choir community, similar to my first moments at Blue Lake in 2005. The lack of a uniform, however, was also viewed positively by ICE 2008 students. Despite the equalizing effect and unifying function of the Blue Lake blues, others felt that the uniform stifled their personality and sense of style, which were strongly associated with each other.

This feeling of being stifled by Blue Lake’s uniform policy started to embody the pressure ICE members felt to be on their best behavior, or, in other words, of constantly needing to perform the role of a Blue Lake goodwill ambassador and enduring cultural and language difficulties, always with a smile. These realizations came to the fore after ICE’s third host community visit. Considered by many to be the most open-minded stop of the tour thus far, and probably of all our visits, we found our Danish hosts energizing

and kind. A primary school nestled in a small community in northern Denmark hosted our group but arranged for us to perform for and visit a boarding school for music and theater students. Other than being close in age, it appeared our group and their students had little in common, at least as far as outward appearances were concerned. We sang for about an hour, and unlike some of our other concerts for musical groups, they did not sing for us. One of the Danish students commented that everyone sang in the choir at their school, but that they were not as good as our group.

Instead of leaving with an impression of their artistic or musical identity, ICE members immediately took note of the extreme clothing styles featured by the Danish youth. A walking violation of Blue Lake dress codes, these young students sported headwear, distracting footwear, obvious jewelry, body piercings, and extreme hair colors and styles. In light of their interactions with this “afterschool” group, I asked students if they thought that Blue Lake embodied the opposite extreme as compared to the openness and freedom of the Danish students. Although not believing that Blue Lake was a stand-in for the opposite side of the spectrum, one student noted the following about the Blue Lake experience: “Sometimes you want to do something and you know that it wouldn’t be that bad, but still it’s not within the group rules and you know you’d stick out, so you can’t exactly be unique, which I find really upsetting because I have a really weird sense of style, and sometimes when I can’t wear my hot pink pants, I get upset” (Interview, June 28, 2008). The uniform served as an example of how members thought that Blue Lake rules stifled individual members. Barely half-way through the tour, the constant need to fall in line with the expected norms of behavior wore on some. The uniform

became a contested state where individuals struggled to still remain true to themselves, yet helped to unite the group.

In addition to the moments above, two instances revealed how wearing uniforms could instigate negative and, in some cases, frightening responses from others. During another staff member's tour in 2002, she explained that the ensemble consciously made the decision not to wear the uniform in public, even when participating in group activities. This change in Blue Lake standards was very appropriate, considering that her choir toured during the summer following September 11, and tour staff members and Blue Lake staff hoped to prevent the group from being targeted by anti-American groups.

Though not as sober a situation as in 2002, ICE 2008 experienced a traumatizing incident during our first host stay. The first group activity in Geneva was very positive, and the hike and waterfall the following day equally served as a group-building experience. During the latter activity, however, students were allowed to wear their civilian clothes, or "civies," signaling a change from typical Blue Lake uniform policies. Before traveling to Geneva, we spent the morning rehearsing our repertoire at our host school. We had three hours of rehearsals scheduled, which seemed a bit excessive, and did not excite many considering that all were recovering from Intensive Week and international travel. Instead of having time to interact with the French students, or being welcomed at the school, we were kept in a gymnasium and only encountered the students through the windows of the space and during restroom breaks. This bizarre experience deserves extensive quotation from my field journal:

For the most part [the morning rehearsal] was pleasing, except when our group was interacting with the school children. During one of our breaks, the students were having lunch, and the Blue Lakers who needed to use the restroom were laughed at and almost scoffed at by the massive group of French students. Even

when another counselor and I used the restroom, I could feel every eye on us; kids were running around and appeared to be largely unsupervised. In addition to the laughing, I was later asked by [French] students if I spoke French ([asked] in English, of course). Our students' responses to this odd attention seemed to be general interest in the French students, some feelings of being insulted, or nervousness about being a center of attention. [French] students were able to see into our rehearsal, some banged on the windows, and some stared. Our students were chastised by the principal of the school for probably doing similar things while the French students were in class. Blue Lakers distracted them, allegedly took a photo of them in class, both of which led to a serious talk with the ICE director. (Journal, June 17, 2008)

Discussing this incident, and even looking back now, it is difficult for me not to get upset and place blame primarily on the French students for their behavior, and on the absent teachers for not better controlling their students. As our first interaction with a host community and school, this negative event seems to have been caused by our appearance at the school as strangers, all wearing the same uniform.

I believe this negative experience, an anomaly for Blue Lake tours, also resulted from straying from Blue Lake protocol that all international tour members receive host families. In our first stop, over half of our group did not have host families and instead stayed at a chalet in the region. I was one of the fortunate twenty-five or so who had a family, largely because another staff member gave up her host family arrangement, remembering that in 2006 I did not have host families in our last two tour stops in France. The host family experience is discussed in more detail below, but first some student reactions to this French school are necessary.

I interviewed several students after our French stop, some students who had host families, and others who did not. My first group of interviewees all had host families, and their reactions to our first day at the school were noticeably less prejudiced than others

who did not have this host family connection. Three students had this to say about the French school experience:

Member 1: Well, I think middle school boys are the same everywhere: annoying and immature, so that wasn't really any different; I get that at home. But it was weird because we didn't know what they were saying so I'm like, "Huh? You're yelling at me and I can't even understand you. How funny."<sup>5</sup>

Member 2: Um, my host sister told me that, um, because we wore uniforms, that's the reason that everybody was laughing at us and stuff, like if they seemed to be, like, smiling and laughing...

Member 1: [Interrupting] Oh well that's comforting, 'cause if they were laughing at us because we're Americans that would be kind of ... [trails off]

Member 2: ... but she was like, "We don't have to wear uniforms ever, so they were laughing at you for your shirts and stuff."

Member 3: I don't blame them. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

Perhaps if more ICE members had host families, then more of them would have understood why we drew such attention from the French students. In the end, it came down to the difference between us and them, and since we clearly stood out in our blues, it was difficult to initiate positive interactions with the French students and hosts, something to which nearly every other host community strived.

### 3.3. THE HOST FAMILY EXPERIENCE

From the moment ICE members left the bus, the choir began to rework its own community, while simultaneously fitting it within that of seven different host communities. From the International Exchange Program's inception, Mrs. Stansell found that host families were the key to a positive experience for students in Europe, allowing

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<sup>5</sup> This student's response about the language barrier highlights a theme many students expressed. What is most interesting with her thoughts, however, is that she was one member who had studied French in school, thus begging the question: what was different about this language experience from those with her host family, where she served as translator for the other ICE members and her hosts?

individuals to encounter a different culture more deeply than a hotel or hostel stay would allow. This important component of the program came up when many members did not have a host family in France. One girl remarked that she felt like she did not get to experience French culture because of her arrangement at the chalet. She was, however, excited to be chosen to stay in one of the Mongolian camping tents on the chalet's property.

Blue Lake staff prepared students for this crucial component of musical exchange, setting the standard of courtesy, good behavior, and politeness when interacting with one's hosts. As students stumbled through possible language barriers, making friends with their new parents and siblings, and doing what Europeans do, they shared their interests in music as a way to communicate, share each other's culture, and get to know one another.

Each host community chairperson worked with volunteers from the community to assign students to different families. ICE members were often placed in families in groups of two or three, but at several stops, students stayed alone with families, or to the other extreme, one family was able to host eight of our students. As students had no control over who they stayed with, the staff members constantly strove to mediate their responses to the announcements of their host family assignments. If students celebrated their housing arrangements too gleefully or expressed their disappointment in the situation, the feelings of other Blue Lakers might be hurt or our hosts could easily misinterpret their responses, thus making a poor first impression. Thankfully I did not have to worry much about such faux pas, as one student commented on this subject: "Obviously, we're not all best friends [in the choir], but I'm pretty confident that I will

not make a disgusted face if I have to room with anybody in this choir” (Interview, June 16, 2008). Instead of expressing negative or indifferent feelings, students were encouraged to “[g]reet the members of your host family with a smile, a firm handshake, and ‘hello’ in their language. First impressions are important. [...] Be alert, energetic, and enthusiastic – even if you are tired” (“Students Responsibility in Host Family,” 1). While members of our community were often tired from a long day’s travel or the travails and challenges from the previous community, each new group of hosts still deserved our best.

Once ICE members were matched with families, they were taken to their new homes away from home, and each European family then assumed most of the staff responsibilities covered at Blue Lake and during the transitions between communities. As a staff member, I also enjoyed time spent with host families and the freedom from the rest of the group. During most stays, we ate our meals, went on sight-seeing excursions, and spent free time exclusively with our families. Except when ICE rehearsed together, performed, or participated in group sight-seeing activities, students were not to try to meet with other choir members, unless host families made arrangements to meet with several families. As International program guides warned, ICE members were not to isolate themselves from their hosts:

Avoid Cliques...Cliques are not only in bad taste and impolite, but you may offend your Europeans [*sic*] friends and hosts. American friends who stay together in a host family should be particularly careful not to exclude the family from your conversations and activities. It is also important not to form cliques within your International group. Make an effort to know everybody in your ensemble! (“Some Things to Think about...”)

Even from our time at Blue Lake, staff were instructed to watch out for the formation of cliques, particularly as they could have negative effects in Europe and upset others.



To gauge the group dynamic, I asked students about how bonded they felt to their peers, and, without my mentioning cliques by name, several students brought up the issue. Early on in the tour, one group of students stated:

Member 1: I think people form cliques, or have their own little groups, and that's representative of our society, cuz if you look at my high school, you know, there's always little groups. So, I think [our group] is different from the jazz band, who has, like, twenty people, cuz it's more, like, you know everyone and you're with everyone, and I think it's just hard to have everyone know each other really well when you have a choir of seventy-five, it's not as realistic.

But on a positive note, they also remarked:

Member 2: We're all a big family...

Member 3: A choir family, with Papa White...

Member 4: Daddy White!

Member 3: ...and Uncle Joe!<sup>6</sup>

The first student also said:

I think we're all here because we love to sing, or else we never would have survived Intensive Week. So, I think that it makes a difference because we all have something in common already. Plus, we all wear blue all the time, and, um, I think that we were all chosen for a reason too, so we all get along with each other pretty well, so it's a pretty good group, better than, like, if you took, like, a group of kids from my high school to go, or something. We're way better. (Interview, June 16, 2008)

These interviewees bring up several significant points already highlighted throughout this study. First, since our group is a choir, consists of many members, and is not, for example, as small as the International Jazz Band, we experience a different sort of group dynamic than one with fewer members. Early on at camp it was difficult for everyone to get to know each other. After arriving in Europe, however, ICE members still

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<sup>6</sup> Joe, or Kurt, was our German bus driver. He and the director had been working together since 2005, and I first met him and found him to be a vital member of our "choir family" during the 2006 tour.

sensed that the group was close, a family even, that consequently would be split into multiple families throughout the trip. Even on our first day in Europe and after having just met our bus driver, these students accepted him into our community. (The bus driver frequently wore Blue Lake t-shirts he had received as gifts during previous tours.) The students were also aware of the importance of Intensive Week in this group formation and the weight of wearing uniforms.

These students, however, were aware that cliques have formed in the choir. For choir members who read their tour materials and listened to reminders about avoiding cliques, these comments indicate that members of the group both created and noticed the creation of smaller sub-groups. During the tour, any negative impact from these formations was not shared with me, as a counselor. As staff, I tuned in to exclusionary behavior of other students, seeing the isolation of one or two members as the most undesirable consequence of the formation of cliques.

The first student specifically mentions her take on cliques, not necessarily as a consequence of the size of the choir, but as similar to small groups of friends and a characteristic of “our society,” which she clearly sees happening in her high school. She seems accepting of the inadvertent formation of smaller groups and does not express that she has been personally offended or harmed by the groups in the choir. Nearly six months after the conclusion of the tour, I asked her about the topic again. She stated, “[L]ooking back, I don't think we had ‘cliques’ in the choir, just friend groups, which is natural because most people like to spend time with people similar to them. I don't think the ‘cliques’ made a big difference on the tour” (E-mail, January 23, 2009). As the trip progressed, and as time passed, the issue of cliques became a non-issue.

While in Europe, two other members shared analogous thoughts on the subject of cliques and society:

Member 1: There's still those cliques and stuff.

Member 2: But there'll always be cliques wherever you go, though.

Member 1: But we all get along really well. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

ICE members perceived that their peers had broken Blue Lake's "avoid cliques" rule, but students still functioned and behaved well despite having social groups.

After our fourth city, members continued to articulate that they found the choir to be even closer than during Intensive Week and throughout the first half of the tour. One member states:

Frankly, I think also as a choir, we've gotten a lot closer, like, over the past few days. [...] Um, when we were at Blue Lake, a lot of us were just, like, struggling trying to learn the music and, like, we were just kind of trying to stay to our own cliques, but now everyone's just kinda, like, more open, and friendships have kind of locked in place, some have changed. (Interview, June 28, 2008)

Here cliques almost stand in contrast to friendships; the former are perhaps easier and represent a survival mechanism during the difficult periods of Intensive Week. These friendships, however, have matured over a longer, but still quite intensive, amount of time. Seeing how each person behaves in a host family setting also shows more of the nuances of each member's personality; the changing settings of friendship formation strengthened the group as members grew to understand each other more thoroughly.

The community evolved throughout the tour, especially as more members were housed with others they had not interacted with much before. I asked one student about the role of the host family and our substantiation as a choir community:

RGH:<sup>7</sup> Do you think it helps that, like, we have no control over who we stay with. I mean, you could be placed with someone you've not even spoken with really.

Member: Yeah, I really like that fact, because that way you can, um, meet new people and see who they really are. Like, for example, I was staying with Sherry and I haven't really talked to her much, and she's a really nice person. (Ibid.)

The European host families helped ICE members to reconstitute their own community, specifically as individuals grew to meet their friends and fellow musicians in the various settings of the European home, supermarket, shopping mall, bowling alley, and backyard barbeque.

Unmistakably the relationship of cliques and groups within ICE strongly related back to how members interacted with their host parents and siblings; the Blue Lake rules and advice on this topic helped significantly throughout the tour. I, however, particularly appreciate this advice, as one student stated: "if we can't get along with the people in our choir, then how will we get along with the people in our host families?" (Interview, June 16, 2008). To show how members did "get along" with their families, I highlight below how music served as a means for the exchange of cultures and friendship, specifically outside of the group performance setting.

One could produce a single thesis on the numerous experiences ICE members had in host families during the tour. Although I incorporate positive host family experiences from students below, it should not be assumed that all student encounters were so rewarding. These remarks, however, show how music was a vehicle for making friendships and sharing cultures. Even if music takes the stage in this portion, other

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<sup>7</sup> "RGH" indicates contributions and questions from the author.

activities, such as shopping, “girl-talk,” and hobbies such as horseback riding were cited as elements of the host family stay that helped unite ICE members with their hosts.

To some students’ surprise, their European hosts shared similar interests in music. One member commented that he and his host sister “liked just about all the same music,” watched MTV, and that “[w]e had a lot of the same ideas about pop culture” (Interview, July 7, 2008). Learning that they had music in common helped to dismantle cultural barriers and get along with each other.

Though our choir was mostly hosted by musical groups, students could not always expect to have music in common with their families. Many, however, were eager to talk with their American guests about music. One ICE member said that she and her hosts “talked about, like, the instruments and stuff that they played,” and her host mom in Emsdetten was a singer who liked to talk to her “about, like, what kind of warm-ups and stuff that we did” (Interview, July 4, 2008). This same member also expressed that she felt most connected with her family in Emsdetten, particularly because they had e-mailed her before the tour.

Another student found commonalities with her host family from Emsdetten. She stated that she and her host sister

actually bonded over music and we have, like, a lot of the same tastes [...] and she likes “Rocky Horror Picture Show” and, like, Bon Jovi and a lot of, like, that era. And I, like, know all that music from my dad. [...] And then she played me some of her, like, favorite German bands, and it was really pretty cool. [...] I couldn’t understand any of it, but it was really good. It was a lot like American, um, kind of like rock. (Interview, June 22, 2008)

ICE members could easily facilitate such listening sessions; discussions of what each person had on their iPod turned into opportunities to share musical interests with their hosts and other choir members.

Several students indicated more hands-on musical exchanges with their hosts. The following are a few of these accounts:

Earlier at dinner we were asking if [our host family] knew any songs that we [the choir] were singing, [...] and then we started to, um, I don't even remember why, but we started singing random things and then, um, then, uh, Luc, our host brother, he, like, joined in on the things. I, I think it was Bohemian Rhapsody. That was pretty funny. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

We talked about music at the dinner with a whole bunch, with the guests, because one of 'em could sing, she sang alto in a choral choir. And, um, she sang for us, and then me and Jane, and Colleen, and Susan, we all sang our National Anthem for them at the dinner table. It, it was fun. (Interview, June 19, 2008)

In Kellinghusen, we went to this party at, um, Angie's host family, and they whipped out the guitar and the accordion and the drum box and we had this, like, jam session, and they had, they played a bunch of American songs and then German songs and so they all sang for like an hour and a half. It was so much fun. (Interview, July 1, 2008)

On the last night we had this barbeque, and, um, some of the friends of the family same over and we were talking with their daughters a lot. Jackson brings down the guitar, and they bring, they whip out this songbook that they have [*The German Songbook*] ... and Jackson starts playing and we're all singing [...] And we all sang along for a very long, good time. We all sang "Hand in Hand," actually. (Interview, July 1, 2008)

I learned how to play the accordion last night. My little host brother taught me. It was really cute. [...] That was really fun because we don't really play the accordion back in the States. [...] Actually my whole host family was just like, we were all just, like, trying to figure out, trying to teach me how to do it. It was good bonding time. And [the host brother] did a little concert for me too, so that was really enjoyable. (Interview, July 1, 2008)

In each of these glimpses into different students' host family experiences, ICE members emphasize how they enjoyed making music spontaneously with their hosts. In each instance, the different actors both gave something musically and received something musical in return. Students expressed equal excitement about the American music that they shared and the other types of music that were less familiar. The fourth student was able to reenact and re-perform "Hand in Hand," a piece from ICE's repertoire that we

sang with our Kellinghusen host choir. From the Blue Lake and host family members present, they had the voice parts necessary to sing this song and recreate the collaborative concert experience. Originally I was surprised by how present music was in these students' host family visits, particularly in the second instance. One does not typically hear of Americans singing their National Anthem at the dinner tables of the French. Still, these memories stood out to ICE members; the exchange drew them closer to other ICE members and their hosts.

Before describing scheduled performances in the host communities, one last, hybrid musical exchange deserves attention. During the third stop, ICE spent considerable time at the host elementary/middle school. Between attending classes, playing soccer, and using the zip line, a true "jam session" broke out during one of the students' breaks. Similar to the examples of music-making with their hosts, this jam session not only combined American and Danish adolescents, but also relates to what Andrew Dabczynski calls a "recontextualization of a tradition held in [one's] home environment[]" (1994, 195). In his dissertation, he argues that the resituated house parties at one of the staff's cabins corresponded to the sense of community during the camp.

Dabczynski describes this type of event as

a loud, crowded, joyful affair. Typically, attending "party guests" would crowd into the main room of the cabin, spilling over onto the porch and squeezing into the main doorway and those of adjoining rooms, and would even stand outside if necessary – leaning in through the windows – to be part of the session. [...] The acknowledged leader at any given point was difficult to determine. The music was initiated by various individuals [...] The music-making was hearty and robust, and when space permitted was often punctuated by impromptu Quebecois step dancing. (Ibid.)

What I referred to as "a wailing session" in an interview with students took place at the center of the school complex. The school had multiple buildings, and the music space

was a small structure with multiple entrances that were opened during the break. The loud, amplified musical sound easily filled the space and attracted new onlookers from the school's buildings and sports field. Although the jam session was not planned, it drew a lot of attention, and ICE members and Danish students mixed together, bobbing their heads to the music or even dancing, as space permitted. One ICE member was the primary soloist, but he sought input from other people participating. Most noticeably, neither our choir director nor the school's music director played any sort of leadership role, but our director did dance along.

In a flurry of excited chatter, several choir members later shared their thoughts on the session. Their repeated overall consensus was that it was "the coolest thing ever."

Member 1: That was so cool! I was there from the beginning; I was so proud. It was awesome.

Member 2: I was so proud. I ran out and I got everyone to go watch Sam. That was really cool.

[All talking at once]

Member 1: I've never experienced something like that where it's just like everyone just, like, starts randomly doin' stuff and then it really becomes music. That's how life should be.

[Several members comment that they enjoy randomly bursting into song, and relate that to how life should be a Disney movie, or how life should be randomly accented by musical interludes.]

RGH: What were the other Danish kids thinking, or, like, what was their response, those who were listening and playing...?

Member 2: There was this little kid in the corner, and he was just jammin' around with the music, but it had, like, no rhythm and he was really enjoying it, just dancin' there. "You're really cool!" (Interview, June 28, 2008)

This musical experience showed how ICE and their hosts coordinated musically to present a spontaneous concert and jam session. During their rendition of "Play that Funky



Music, White Boy,” Blue Lakers contributed vocals, keyboard, drums, and guitar to the band, and Danish students played drums on another drum set, and bass guitar. All were playing and singing without the text or lead sheets. The entire affair lasted not more than twenty minutes, and as a staff member, I mostly agonized over the state of the singer’s voice for the rest of the tour.

To conclude, ICE members developed a further sense of community during this jam session, where they could relax and enjoy music beyond that of the tour repertoire. The group came together in a new space in Europe, incorporating Danish students and host siblings into the impromptu performance of music, dance, and community. Through discussions about music and playing music, host families helped choir members feel welcome, and the host family arrangements allowed for different choir members to interact more intimately with one another, drawing the entire group closer together.

### 3.4. ICE HOST COMMUNITIES AND PERFORMANCES

Of the seven host communities that hosted ICE in 2008, five were directly connected to school-age groups. Two host stays were sponsored by school big/rock bands (Emsdetten and Syddjurs) and two were youth choirs (Calbe and Bückeburg); the French stay was sponsored by a school. It, however, did not have a consistent musical counterpart to the ICE choir. In Kellinghusen and Erps-Kwerps, adult choirs hosted ICE. In each community, ICE had the opportunity to perform alongside or with either the hosting ensemble or a community ensemble.

“[T]here are many opportunities for musical exchange with hosting performing groups” (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 6). As co-musical experiences, the concerts and host communities of Emsdetten, Kellinghusen, and Bückeburg deserve further explication

because they fulfill the goals and expectations of the Blue Lake International Exchange Program and add to the concept of choir explored thus far. First, ICE performances in Emsdetten emphasize the body of the choir as physical, kinetic, and flexible. For the first time in Kellinghusen, ICE shared the performance stage with Pro Gospel, the host choir, and ICE worked to negotiate this intimate space when performing “Hand in Hand” and “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” with them. Finally, the penultimate stop on the tour seemed to reverse some of the elements ICE had come to take for granted, leading to new challenges for the community and a general letdown after the previous visit to Calbe.

Our first German city, Emsdetten, included five concerts, the highest number we performed in any one community. The director heightened everyone’s anticipation about this community. Emsdetten and the “Big Band” had hosted ICE during previous years, the director had an excellent rapport with the host chairperson, and he expected to be overwhelmed by the excitement of the German host families. True to his word, as our bus pulled into the school parking lot, all of our families were clapping and cheering, lining the entrance of the school to the cafeteria where everyone met their families.

Even though this German stop was new for me, I experienced the relief of coming home to Germany after the challenging language issues in France. As my comfort with my family and community members grew, I became another type of insider, reemphasizing my multiple roles on this trip as ethnographer, chorister, staff member, friend, German expert, and now possibly as some form of German. In Emsdetten I began introducing each song in German during our concerts, providing the title, composer/arranger, soloists, some background information, if appropriate, and a self-effacing commentary on my sub-par language skills.

I truly felt accepted the first morning of our stay. ICE members attended school with their host brothers and sisters and were invited to participate in the school's fundraiser, which consisted of a walking/running race to earn money for schools in India and the Philippines. Before the race began, school officials offered a few words of encouragement. During this period, I was casually speaking in German with one of the organizers, and he mistook me as German, acting surprised when I explained that I was a staff member from the Blue Lake choir. Having the German language skills and cultural capital situated me in a complex web of groups, and these multiple memberships added to the intricacies of ICE as choir and community.

In addition to the glee in being mistaken for German, the race uplifted my and the other staff member's spirits as we wound around the school, taking the time to enjoy the nearby fields, fresh air, and observing the commingling of ICE students with their hosts. Some took the race seriously, and ICE community members stretched their legs, revealing the choir's physical nature not only as sound producing, but as a vessel for the bodily activity of racing, walking and running.

During three out of ICE's five concerts, we performed alongside the German school's Big Band, alternating songs and short sets of songs. The band resembled a concert band, including flutes, saxophones, and brass instruments, as well as keyboard, electric guitar, electric bass, and drums. Their repertoire included lots of popular American music, such as "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Time of My Life," complete with choreography from the film "Dirty Dancing." All dual Big Band/ICE performance spaces were outdoors, either in the school's courtyard or the Emsdetten town center. In contrast to the significant amount of equipment necessary for the Big Band, including chairs,

music stands, microphones, electronic equipment, instruments, and even people, ICE demonstrated its dexterity as an extremely adaptable ensemble. The choir's only equipment requirements were microphones, risers, and a keyboard so that the group's sound was amplified enough to be heard outdoors, especially when paired with the band's loud and at times thunderous sound. This ability to produce such a sound certainly influenced one student's assessment: "Big Band was amazing. I hate to say it, but they blew us out of the water" (Interview, June 22, 2008). ICE's gospel and popular pieces, including Keith Hampton's "Praise His Holy Name," Eugene Simpson's "Hold On!," Paul Caldwell's "Go Where I Send Thee," and a *cappella* arrangements of Jeff Buckley's "Hallelujah," Rockapella's version of "I Can See Clearly Now," and Rascal Flatts' "Mayberry," complemented the boisterous band.

Since the choir was unencumbered by instruments and music stands, unlike the Big Band or any other instrumental ensemble, ICE joined in performing during the Big Band segments by dancing along to their fast pieces and clapping and swaying during the others. During the two outdoor concerts at the school, the choir members did this clapping and dancing in smaller groups mixed among their German hosts, but in the town square, the choir remained on their makeshift stage, effectively adding additional dance accompaniment to the band. The chance to dance added to ICE's performance. Two members remarked, "I loved it cuz I could, um, dance and have fun." "Yeah, we were, like, feeding off of each other's energy" (Interview, June 22, 2008). Our performance stood in marked contrast to the German audience, which remained seated or merely stood and clapped while the Big Band played. In my notes, I reflected: "I wondered if it was rude of us to [dance a lot] because it seemed that we distracted the audience from the

band. My host father explained that in Nordrhein-Westfalen, people would never dance at an event like that” (Journal, June 21, 2008). The unhindered movement of the choir’s dancing, apparent in students and staff members alike, expressed the body of the choir as a collection of people and its flexibility and adaptability to diverse surroundings, beyond the capabilities of bands and orchestras.

Emsdetten stood in stark contrast to the visit in France, where most students did not have host families. At the end of the Emsdetten visit, some ICE members and their hosts had tears in their eyes. Students consistently ranked Emsdetten as one of their favorite stops, provoking some of them to declare that they loved Germany, wanted to live there, and wanted to learn the language. As a German enthusiast, I rejoiced knowing that others had come to share opinions of Germany and Germans similar to my own, particularly the ease at which one can feel at home and accepted as part of the German communities we visited.

The second German community, Kellinghusen, differed substantially from Emsdetten. Though still hosted by a musical group, ICE had its first opportunity to perform with their host families. The town is much smaller than the communities who hosted us in Emsdetten, and, similarly, ICE’s arrival was highly anticipated since ICE has performed in Kellinghusen for many years. In some ways, this visit recreated my 2006 experience in the town. I stayed with the same staff member in the same host family, we watched soccer together, traveled to obscure parts of northern Germany, had successful concerts, and capped off the visit with an amazing get-together and buffet. The director specifically added “Mayberry” to the repertoire because of the host chairman’s love of country music, and for the first time during the tour, ICE sang the piece “Michigan

Morn,” by H. Owen Reed, as an attempt at redemption after a 2006 mistake-laden performance.

The overall attitude about the Kellinghusen concert was positive. Students felt that the performance went well, that it was the group’s best concert to date. Several members remarked:

Member 1: Um, I think our concert went fairly well, a lot of people have said that, um, it was, like, the best concert we’ve had so far musically.

Member 2: I thought musically that we did really good because I know my host mom was crying after the end of the concert. She said we were really good.

Member 3: I thought the musical experience was really neat. Um, I knew all of [the host choir] Pro Gospel’s songs, so it was pretty exciting for me, cuz most of the time when they sing to us, I don’t know what they’re saying, so it was pretty exciting. And then we did really well at our concert and sometimes we don’t do that well, so it was really cool. (Interview, June 28, 2008)

Despite this positive perception of the concert, not all members found it to be as successful, particularly pertaining to “Michigan Morn.” One member commented:

Member 4: I think everything went really well, except for the “Michigan Morn” song in which I kind of messed up, I know...

RGH: I didn’t hear it...

Member 4: Okay. That’s why I stopped singing and just mouthed the words because Mr. White told us not to sing if we don’t know, so I tried that and then I came back in when I knew it. (Interview, June 28, 2008)

During this visit, our host chair recorded the concert and provided the staff with a CD of ICE’s songs. When listening to this particular piece and comparing it to the score and the recording made during the homecoming concert in July, one can detect the group’s moments of uncertainty. The song is complicated due to its four different verses that all begin with the same phrase: “There is gold in the eye/sound/touch/heart of the

morning, in Michigan where I was born.” The proceeding phrase begins with “There is gold” again, but then diverges on to topics of lakes, roses, honey, songs, lands, and other natural resources of Michigan. The memorization skills for this song are further complicated by the repetitive and alternate usage of a half note/two eighth note and dotted quarter/quarter/eighth note motif. At moments during this performance, these two measure patterns simultaneously appear, making the words and rhythm murky and difficult to understand. The group’s other concern with words manifested itself as the “the” in the first phrase was pronounced either as “thee,” when followed by a word beginning with a vowel, or “the,” for words followed by consonants. After the first verse, a mixture of both “ee” and “uh” commingled, making the text unclear for the audience. The major issue with the piece in 2006 related to the soloist, a staff member, who forgot part of the text during the solo, in contrast to 2008’s soloist who confidently sang the text, only slightly altering the melody line during one portion. By most calculations, the song was successful and does not vary much from the later recording at Blue Lake. ICE rarely performed “Michigan Morn” during the tour, despite its clear reference to Blue Lake’s and many members’ home state. As a song that could possibly unite Michiganders from our group and reveal the state’s natural landscape to European audiences, it did not play a central role in the repertoire. Several students (including Michigan residents) commented that it was their least favorite tour piece, and its tour performance served the redemptive needs of a different community (ICE 2006) and not the artistic and cultural goals of musical exchange for ICE 2008.

ICE performed sixteen other pieces on June 26, including “Hand in Hand” and “The Lord Bless You and Keep You,” which also featured the host ensemble. Before

these concluding two pieces, Pro Gospel performed several of their songs as well, including a different arrangement of “Steal Away,” a song which ICE also performed that night. Instead of raving about the opportunity to sing with another ensemble or the connections the group made with the German choir, most student comments were more subdued and even critical of the other choir’s musical skill and performance. Overall, what ICE members liked the most about Pro Gospel were their songs. The familiarity of these songs, which consisted of spiritual and gospel pieces, interested the ICE students and constituted the part of the other choir’s performance that they enjoyed the most. Students also liked the drum box that the group utilized during certain pieces.

One student, however, remarked that she thought and was surprised that ICE was better than Pro Gospel. When asking students about the two pieces the groups sang together, one student commented, “It was really different [singing with them] cuz I was surrounded by all of them, it was, like, me and Heather in the middle of all black t-shirts” (Interview, June 28, 2008). One student found that these pieces were successful, but she expressed disappointment in not getting to interact with the choir before singing with them, that “random” musicians were told to sing together, and that there was no emotional connection with Pro Gospel. She further stated:

Like, of course the music was there and then, like, you could tell we were all, like, passionate about it, but I couldn’t feel how they were, or at each other, like, when we [ICE] sing together, there’s something in mind, but when the other choir comes in, I just feel Blue Lake and not them. I get it when they sing, just by themselves, but not when we’re together. (Interview, July 1, 2008)

Musically Pro Gospel and ICE’s dual performance of “Hand in Hand” did not noticeably differ from ICE’s recording made at Blue Lake. The Kellinghusen recording of “The Lord Bless You and Keep You,” however, featured the divergent pronunciations and



tonal qualities of the choirs. Pro Gospel pronounced the English text differently, and the group's adult voices and particularly German sounding cultivation of sound production and color did not mesh well with ICE's now consistent performance of the piece.

Comments from ICE members highlight that the portion of the Kellinghusen concert they enjoyed most was when each group performed their own pieces, and that no special connection magically transpired when the two came together during the last two pieces. This emotional bond, already strongly rooted in ICE members, did not transfer to Pro Gospel members, simply because they sang with ICE. Instead, the valuable moments of exchange of ideas and sentiments occurred during individual performances of each group. Perhaps the age of Pro Gospel members, resembling the ages of ICE members' parents, and the lack of group activities with the host community did not allow for this emotional bond. The lack of rehearsals for these songs differed strongly from the care and dedication on which ICE had been rooted since May Weekend and Intensive Week.

Taking these elements into consideration, ICE's stop in Bückeberg could have produced some sort of connection with the host choir, particularly since ICE students felt that they were musically equal (or at worst slightly inferior) to the Bückeberg choir, and the choir was a youth choir. One student liked the Bückeberg choir: "It was really cool because they were, like, us, but German" (Interview, July 4, 2008). Any musical or emotional connections, however, were hampered in Bückeberg because ICE had its community performance on the day the group arrived. Others thought that it felt strange to sing with the group on the first night: "We didn't know the people that we were singing with." "Yeah, so it wasn't as personal" (Interview, July 4, 2008).

The musical component of the Bückebug stop stood in contrast to the Big Band in Emsdetten. Students stated that the number of concerts with their Emsdetten hosts helped them to get to know each other, and being able to dance when they played added to the performance. As the fourth host community that I had visited with ICE 2006, the Bückebug concert and stay differed, primarily because we did not have as much time with our hosts before the concert, ICE performed at a different concert venue, and I did not stay with the same family. Before leaving Blue Lake, ICE worked on several pieces to perform with the Bückebug choir, but despite these rehearsals and a quick run-through in Bückebug, these pieces did not run smoothly in performance. The short “Hallelujah” and “Dona nobis pacem” pieces broke down as the choir members were unsure as to which part of the round they were supposed to sing or when they were to enter. To add to the lack of performance clarity, the Bückebug director conducted the pieces, and the choirs were scattered around the audience in the church, making it difficult to listen to everyone and altering how the groups had originally rehearsed the pieces. After the concert, ICE students got to know their hosts better, especially at a group dinner held for all the Americans and their hosts.

### 3.5. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CELEBRATIONS

“Blue Lake groups will be invited to participate in European festivals which may involve preparation and performance of repertoire selected by our European hosts” (*Staff Handbook* 2008, 6). As ICE performed with different host community ensembles, more spontaneous opportunities presented themselves, either before the choir left the United States or immediately upon arrival in a host community. In some instances, national

celebrations required ICE to rework its performing schedule or face losing audience members.

During several visits, ICE, as a choir and as individuals, was invited to contribute to local, regional, and national celebrations. In addition to providing music for the celebration and fundraiser in Emsdetten, our first afternoon performance coincided with the school's celebration in honoring several teachers who were retiring or leaving. Staff members became more significant participants in this celebration as we were invited to the teacher-only portion of the gala. We enjoyed food and drink and getting to know our hosts better, who were all teachers at the school. We also endured lengthy speeches (in German, of course) given by several teachers, which the other ICE staff members had difficulties understanding.

This work opened with an account of ICE singing "La Marseillaise" with a French brass band. Bringing together two different nationalities in the performance of one national anthem, ICE could show its solidarity with the French members of the community by uniting under a single cause and celebrating the memories of the French. ICE members and I found the event produced mixed results. In a similar situation, Daphne Berdahl mentions how West Germans utilized the West German National Anthem at celebrations in former East Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall as a means to bring two different countries together. One festival and unity parade took place in 1990:

Accompanied by a marching band and a trumpet choir from Eschwege, the parade, along with hundreds of spectators, made its way to the village soccer field, where the GDR flag was lowered for the last time and replaced with the West German one. After brief remarks from the mayors of Kella and adjacent western communities, villagers attempted (largely in vain) to sing along with the West German national anthem. (Berdahl 1999, 211-212)

Accompanied by the brass band and speeches by community members and politicians, the musical commemoration in St. Laurent was a similar attempt for one group to align itself with the culture and tradition of France, embodied in the text, meanings and images of “La Marseillaise.” Our attempt to participate was more scripted, and perhaps not executed in vain, but ICE, assembled in the center of the French town and surrounded by strangers, turned its efforts to contribute to a commemoration whose history the group did not share or know much about into a half-hearted performance by many in the American ensemble.

To comment on my perceptions of the event, I asked students about the ceremony. From frustrations about the group’s behavior, to expressing dissatisfaction that ICE did not have enough time to properly learn the French National Anthem, members did mention some of the strengths of participating in such events during the tour and found that it could be used as a moment to learn about French culture.

I feel like we kind of, like, did something wrong almost because we weren’t very good and, um, we were kind of just covered up by the band, and, like, we weren’t pronouncing things right. But I think we did our best that we could and they probably appreciated it a lot.

I thought it was funny, cuz a lot of us didn’t know it, and even though we practiced it, we didn’t practice it much, so we’re all like messing up and stuff. It was, it was fun [sarcastic].

It was really exhilarating. [...] It was just so amazing. [...] They have their own ceremonies here that are, like, that are special to their country and their own way, and it’s, it’s really nice that we, as Americans, can, like, experience in their culture and kind of give back to them, um, their culture by, like, singing their national anthem. And showing our appreciation for their culture and stuff.

It struck me that this is a time that we can learn something about the history of France and that we ought to be a little bit more respectful, I guess. (Interviews, June 19, 2008)

ICE members felt more welcome and integrated into the community after having the chance to take part in the French ceremony, despite accepting some of the group's weaknesses and mistakes concerning the musical component of the event. After the ceremony and before the concert, ICE was invited to the city hall for drinks and snacks, and the community expressed its appreciation for having Blue Lake there.

ICE also met and performed for the mayor of Bückeburg, acting as cultural ambassadors to officials in Germany.

Our Blue Lake International groups have enjoyed countless other audiences with mayors and important dignitaries throughout Europe. European VIPs have repeatedly told us how important it is that Blue Lake continue its annual International Exchange Program. Europeans tell us our students make better goodwill ambassadors than many of our official governmental and business representatives. (Stansell 2007, 131-132)

Although Blue Lake International Exchange ensembles have had an audience with more significant members of local and national governments, including King Carl XVI of Sweden in 1977, ICE continued its ambassadorial duties and left good impressions with those it met in 2008.

In addition to acting in official and semi-official capacities as cultural ambassadors, ICE members also joined in their European hosts' excitement for the 2008 EuroCup soccer competitions. Although not a national or regional celebration, the EuroCup schedule impacted our touring schedule and the activities in which we participated. Donna Buchanan has commented on how the EuroCup 1990s tournaments had implications for musicians and performers in Bulgaria. Concerning her visit during the 1996 EuroCup championships, she states, "The fact that my friends altered their rehearsal schedule to suit that of the EuroCup signified more than a weakening work ethic born of economic despair" (Buchanan 2002, 2). In this instance, Bulgaria's

performance in the EuroCup served as a means of asserting themselves as prospective members of the European Union and consumers and producers of popular music and culture, particularly in relation to the United States. After touring in 2006 in Germany (the host nation) and France during the World Cup, I anticipated the impromptu parades of celebration, German flags flying proudly, the opportunity to watch each game with my hosts, the inevitable rescheduled concerts, and the chance for ICE to become part of the soccer hype and community in Europe.

Immediately upon arrival in France, the ICE concert that was scheduled for June 17 was rescheduled for the following night so as not to interfere with the scheduled France/Italy game. During our visit to Geneva, the group observed the decorations and advertisements scattered through the city, one of the towns hosting EuroCup matches. Once arriving in Emsdetten, students got their first taste of German soccer fever. In our second community I watched the first playoff game between Germany and Portugal with my hosts and friends during dinner. Several ICE students attended the public viewing with their host siblings. One student commented, “Going to watch the soccer game at the public viewing in Rheine was absolutely insane ... exciting ... just a lot of people; it was awesome” (Interview, June 22, 2008). When heading to the restaurant and then home, I noticed ICE members with German flags painted on their faces, and some students bought jerseys to wear that night and later during the tour.

Since Germany (surprisingly) won the June 19 game, our first night in Kellinghusen also included watching the semi-final game between Germany and Turkey. Not many students mentioned this game, just as few probably watched the game in France because the community was smaller and fewer students had host siblings their

own age. The participation in the festivities in Emsdetten certainly showed ICE members a different side of German culture and helped to create bonds with their hosts from their earliest activities. ICE students performed team solidarity alongside their new friends, becoming a part of this national and European-wide celebration and receiving the experience and excitement communicated to them by their hosts.

### 3.6. CALBE: A MULTIPLICITY OF PERSPECTIVES

By focusing on the host community visit in Calbe, Germany, this section emphasizes the powerful mission of Blue Lake's International Exchange Program, the closeness of ICE as a community, now at its fifth city in Europe, and the degree of our integration into city activities and the lives of residents. Students were highly aware of the significance of our performances in Calbe, especially since this was the city's first time hosting a Blue Lake ensemble and elements of the city's East German past factored in the perceptions of the town. ICE's musical contributions to "Rolandfest," Calbe's yearly city festival, meant that much was riding on our musical success with our hosts.

I draw on a "multiplicity of perspectives" when discussing Calbe because our free time schedule allowed me to discuss the Calbe concerts with sixty-four of the choir's seventy-five members, including the director, and local media reported on our group before, during, and after our visit. By approaching this section in such a way, I address the concerns of authorship and presentation Margery Wolf highlights in her work *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism and Ethnographic Responsibility*. She states,

There are, of course, other ways of amplifying the voices of one's informants. Assuming at the outset that one is not, as Tyler put it above, "simply shifting the burden of truth," or cleverly marshalling all the voices who support one's

interpretation and silencing those who do not, the ethnographer can present the voices of all her informants, including those who disagree. (Wolf 1992,121-122)

Although it would prove difficult to include comments from each ICE student I interviewed, their various thoughts are represented and incorporated here, including divergent views that emphasize the uniqueness of each member's experience in Calbe.

From our arrival in Calbe, it was clear that our hosts were well prepared for our visit. Before the Friedrich Schiller High School's presentation of host families, who had excitedly gathered in the gymnasium, we enjoyed refreshments provided by the school and had the opportunity to regroup. During the presentation, the school's Gospel Choir performed a few pieces, and after the concert, "we were officially greeted by five people, all who helped put this stay together, and some government officials. Most greetings were in German and English. Much was said about the universality of music and how much joy music brings to the lives of those who listen to it" (Journal, June 30, 2008). Most students had their own host families in this stop, including the staff members.

After my Calbe host family initially contacted me, we occasionally corresponded during the months before tour, getting to know one another better. I therefore felt a strong connection with this family, more than any previous host families, and I faced several instances where my loyalty to my hosts conflicted with the activities planned especially for staff. For example, the first evening included a barbeque for all staff, but my host family did not realize that I was meant to attend. As my family was excited that I was finally there and had prepared a special dinner, I found that I could not attend the staff dinner, even as I desired to spend more time with my friends. In addition to the barbeque I also did not participate in the festival's onion-peeling contest as several staff members did. This new allegiance transferred my membership from ICE and the staff to my host



family; they integrated me into their lives at the price of severing ties and experiences with my choir community.

Blue Lake's participation in the city festival went far beyond the onion-peeling contest, however. The theme of Calbe's Rolandfest was "Calbe grüsst Amerika" ("Calbe welcomes America"); the entire celebration revolved around our visit. Calbe's monthly news magazine promoted our visit and the festival on the front page, including a group photo and a prominent article inside:

When Calbe celebrates Rolandfest on June 28, you may hear a few English words on the street, or perhaps see a few American flags flapping in the wind. This year's motto is "Calbe welcomes America." Whoever hasn't noticed it yet should: Within the partnership of the youth exchange between Schiller High School and the United States, eighty young people between the ages of twelve and seventeen with the name "Blue Lake" will be presenting a large choir concert at St. Stephanie's Church.<sup>8</sup> (*Das Calbenser Blatt* 2008, 4)

In addition to the evening concert on June 29, ICE also performed several songs during the evangelical service at St. Stephanie's Church and gave a "sneak preview" of the concert at the main stage during that afternoon's street festival.

To begin the first complete day in Calbe, ICE met in the morning to rehearse before participating in the church service at St. Stephanie's Church. ICE began the service, singing several *a cappella* works, and service leaders conducted the message in German with an English translation following each component. The attendees at the church appreciated the three songs ICE sang. "Already at the church service, the adolescents, with their *a cappella* pieces, enraptured the attendees to the point of thunderous applause. That is rather atypical for church services. Pastor Wolfgang Wenzlaff, however, was not troubled by this because he was equally pleased with the performance" (*Generalanzeiger*, July 2, 2008). One song in particular stood out during

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<sup>8</sup> Translations of the following excerpts from German news media are the author's translations.

the morning concert, “Esto Les Digo” by Kinley Lange, a piece based on Matthew 18: 19-20. Performing this piece during the service was many students’ favorite musical moment that day. One member recalled: “[During the song], oh my gosh, it’s like this tingling feeling all over and you could just feel that we were all right there and it was just like, that’s why I’m singing, and it’s just, to know that was, aw, it was great” (Interview, June 30, 2008). Others also emphasized the euphoric feeling generated by this song, specifically as the piece gained in intensity, leading to the passage where “en el cielo” (in heaven) is repeated three times and reaches the climax of the first quoted verse in Matthew. From measure sixteen to twenty, all voices slowly ascend until “heaven” stretches higher than any other section of the piece thus far, rings strongly at *mezzo forte*, and, in Calbe, rang for moments after the open C, D, F, and G cluster chord was cut off by the assistant director/accompanist.

Example 3.1. Excerpt from “Esto Les Digo,” measures 14-20

The musical score is for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It covers measures 14 to 20 of the piece "Esto Les Digo". The tempo is marked as ♩ = 50. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 in measure 14 to 3/4 in measure 16, and back to 4/4 in measure 20. The lyrics are in Spanish: "pe-dir al-go en o-ra - ción, mi pa-dre que es-tá en el cie-lo, en el cie-lo, en el cie-lo, se lo da-". The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo piano) in measures 14 and 15, *cresc.* (crescendo) from measure 16 to 18, *mf* (mezzo forte) in measure 19, and *p* (piano) in measure 20. The Soprano part starts with a half rest in measure 14. The Alto part starts with a half rest in measure 14. The Tenor part starts with a half rest in measure 14. The Bass part starts with a half rest in measure 14. The score shows a gradual ascent in pitch for all voices from measure 16 to 20.

Here the tingles emerged; it seemed as though everyone held their breath, extending the pause before resuming the text. This moment, therefore, stood out as a literal musical highpoint, according to the text and notation of the song, and as a communal highpoint of the visit in Calbe and the tour in general.

Students also found the church service to be spiritually fulfilling and appreciated the lengths to which the host community went to make the choir feel welcome. Again, accentuating the centrality of “Esto,” a member commented:

I really thought that the way that, um, the way that “Esto Les Digo,” uh, went with what the message was at church was, like, amazing, how much had to go along with it. And, uh, like, I thought that it was really cool that they had the sermon in, uh, English and German, all just because we were there, so that was amazing. (Interview, June 30, 2008)

The integration of the music with the sermon, which focused on global community building and God’s omnipresence, also touched the director and other students.

In fact, the centrality of the church space and the history and memories imagined by some members to have taken place there strongly affected their feelings of belonging to the community in Calbe. Calbe citizens and ICE members immediately picked up on the significance of St. Stephanie’s Church as a concert space. “At the church service on Sunday morning, the Americans were immediately delighted by the acoustics and atmosphere of the location” (Vongries, June 30, 2008). Caroline Vongries, of the newspaper *Volksstimme* also writes,

Ultimately the Calbe concert location, the time-honored St. Stephanie’s Church, occupies a special place among their many other tour destinations. “The young singers have been talking about Calbe for days because they have wanted to sing their program at least once in an old church,” reveals Dieter Klische, member of Magdeburg’s interior minister and 37-year partner with Blue Lake. (Ibid.)

St. Stephanie’s Church fulfilled ICE members’ expectations of what Europe would be like: old and historic. One student remarked that she enjoyed her stay in France because her host family’s house was old, placing value on this characteristic of her stay. With visits to five different countries in very different cities, this expectation of oldness did not hold true consistently, but it remained a considerable advantage in Calbe.

Figure 3.3. Interior of St. Stephanie's Church, Calbe, Germany  
(Photo from Author's Collection)



The acoustics of the church, as referenced during “Esto Les Digo,” allowed for the manipulation and alteration of songs. “I loved the church; it was a great live area. It

was amazing. I loved the end of, like, all of our songs because it, like, echo[ed] for, like, seven seconds afterward,” stated one student (Interview, June 30, 2008). The evening concert allowed for a further appreciation of the concert space.

After the church service, we assembled in the city center at the Rolandfest bandstand. City officials welcomed the city’s Roland Choir, Gospel Choir from Friedrich Schiller High School, ICE, and guests at the festival. Situated between the two German choirs, we previewed “I Can See Clearly Now,” which was turning into the group’s theme song. Similar to the memorial in France, Blue Lake was invited to collaborate with the other two groups singing “An der Saale,” a hymn about the Saale River which runs past Calbe to the west of the city. The piece imagines romanticized castle ruins along the river that remind passers-by of the knights and maidens who occupied its spaces, leaving these observers refreshed yet sorrowful as they continue on their journeys. Even as ICE struggled with the German pronunciation of the text during Intensive Week and the performance, the group was able to give back a piece of the community’s history by joining in singing the piece.

Following the performance, “As a special fee, there were little cakes with sugar icing, that in [Germany] are known as ‘Amerikaner’” (*Generalanzeiger*, July 2, 2008). Those in Calbe enjoyed seeing ICE members cannibalize themselves, and this special gesture was planned well in advance. “Biting into Americans!? [...] Our Schwarz Bakery baked these pieces of cake that will be readied with small American flags and Calbe’s city flags placed on top. We will present these ‘American Cakes’ to our guests as a welcoming greeting!” (*Das Calbenser Blatt* 2008, 14). The generosity of Calbe’s citizens and the lengths they went to include ICE in their festival better facilitated the exchange of

culture and music. Participating later in the day, the director and two other staff members attempted the annual onion-peeling contest, showing their Calban solidarity as members and participants in the city's heritage celebration.

Students spent the afternoon with their host families, either attending the festival or taking excursions outside of the city. Once returning to the church, however, the group reviewed several pieces before the concert, and the director gave his customary pep talk before the concert in a small alcove that was separate from the rest of the church. In contrast to every other time the director addressed the group, he became emotional while expressing his joy about how wonderful the choir sounded during the service and how kind and accommodating those in Calbe had been thus far. The choir's ability to move the director to tears by their talents and ability to make music together equally touched the ICE community. One member said,

I was really proud because it's like, well, the audience thinks we're good automatically, but when your director, who points out all of your mistakes and everything, it's, it means a lot when he, like, cries over how good we sound, so I was just, I was really proud of us. (Interview, June 30, 2008)

The director's leadership skills undoubtedly brought the choir closer together during Intensive Week and throughout the tour, and this moment of emotional reciprocity tied members closer to each other and helped to solidify the ICE 2008 tour as an exceptional experience in the minds of each individual. After the tour, the director recalled from the Calbe visit that

I really do mean it when I tell them how much I love to hear them sing, and how lucky I feel to be a part of what they share through music. It's important to me to let them know that this experience is life-changing for me, too, in large part because of them. I love being able to be "in the moment," and to see it happen to them, too. It helps us all realize how we can each make a difference, and that together, that difference is very significant. (E-mail, January 13, 2009)

For students who were members of the director's school choirs, this side of him was completely new and emphasized the uniqueness of such an opportunity.

The Sunday night concert was an example of ICE living through an optimal experience of enjoyment, or the experience of flow. Laura Lohman interprets the experience of orchestra members' rehearsals as conducive to feelings of flow, as described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Lohman 2001, 97-104). To achieve a sense of flow, several characteristics generally transpire. To summarize Csikszentmihalyi, for an experience to be optimal, the task must be challenging yet accomplishable, it requires concentration, concentration is possible because of clear goals and immediate feedback, everyday concerns disappear, participants feel in control of their actions, self-concern disappears while "the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over," and the sense of time is altered (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 49). Each of these ingredients appeared in conversations with students conducted in the following days. Similar to the concert in Kellinghusen, students, as well as the director, thought that the group accomplished a new musical high. No students, however, mentioned misgivings about any of the pieces from the concert, suggesting that many found that they had succeeded in singing a clean performance, or that these everyday musical concerns and inadequacies were filtered out of their memories of the event. The intensity with which they shared their thoughts indicates that the students took the concert seriously and put their entire being into the performance, concentrating as much as possible on the task at hand. For one student who sang a solo that night, she felt, after completing the song, as though a "piece of her heart" was left in the church, tying her and ICE's performance to the thousands of other performances and events that have occurred in St. Stephanie's Church

since its outward completion in 1495. The stretching of time and historical place-ness relates directly to the length of the program. ICE sang nearly its entire repertoire, including some pieces twice, leaving the audience with a program that lasted almost two hours. Time was possibly on the minds of many audience members, however, as this highly anticipated concert coincided with the EuroCup final game between Germany and Spain.

The element required for experiencing flow that closely represents ICE members' thoughts relates to the requirement that the event have clear goals and immediate positive feedback. As general goals, this concert was held to help Calbe celebrate its Rolandfest, to thank the community and host families for their generosity, to engage in cultural and musical exchange, and to exquisitely sing the ICE repertoire that the group had been working on for months. The degree to which ICE members were receptive to the audience, however, and the audience's reception in Calbe, significantly affected the group, promoting an extended, euphoric event where audience and choir participated in an active feedback loop of energy, friendship, and feeling.

Upon entering the church, ICE immediately started to participate in a feedback loop with the audience. One member commented, "I always love walking in and singing, um, "As I Went Down to the River to Pray," cuz, like, as you're walking in you see all their faces and they're just, like, really excited to have you there" (Interview, June 30, 2008). One of Csikszentmihalyi's depictions of rewarding feedback relates to how ICE perceived what constituted positive feedback from the audience in Calbe. The psychiatrist's perception of his or her patient's body position and facial expression resemble the clues ICE members responded to during the concert (Csikszentmihalyi



1990, 56). Members mentioned how they enjoyed watching elderly concertgoers who closed their eyes and swayed with the music. Others enjoyed watching the faces of the audience, noticing tears in their eyes and sometimes responding in kind to those emotional displays. One student recalled:

I thought [the concert] was cool because we were obviously really connected to our music, and because we were connected to it, they became connected to it, it was a whole mutual thing. We had this kind of “über-connection” kind of thing going on. You could tell cuz there was a guy sittin’ in the front row and he was smiling the entire time, and you look at him and he’d just be smiling, and you’d feel really good. And you’d keep singing... (Interview, June 30, 2008)

Students enjoyed singing “Esto” during the concert as well as at the church service. One student recollected that

at the end of the song, I looked out in the audience and I saw a bunch of old women crying. It was just, it was really nice to just know that we, like, touched someone that much to the point where they were like, “Oh, my make-up is running.” It was really nice. (Interview, June 30, 2008)

The highlight for some was the end of the concert. During “Praise His Holy Name,” ICE’s customary penultimate piece, we left the front of the church and surrounded the audience during the last section of the song. Even though this was the first time ICE sang this song in such a formation (other than that day’s afternoon rehearsal), it was very successful. Students thought the sound overwhelmed the audience and that the choir was able to positively manipulate the acoustics of the church in this arrangement. One student recreated this moment as her favorite during the concert:

Definitely during “Praise His Holy Name” when we were walking down, the entire audience, like, lit up like never before, and, like, some people [during the solo], they started, like, rubbing their arms because they had, like, goose bumps from it. And I thought that was pretty amazing. And then, like, the expression on their faces, like, when they were clapping, like, they truly, like, enjoyed our music, and that definitely, like, made it seem like the entire point of us going to, like, over internationally was finally, like, met there in Calbe. (Interview, June 30, 2008)

The group then performed “The Lord Bless You and Keep You,” maintaining the same group formation surrounding the audience. I shared this as my favorite musical moment with several members, recalling how, at the conclusion of the song, one woman near me was crying and mouthed thank-you to me. I enjoyed this type of interaction with the audience and was overwhelmed by how the piece sounded with the audience encircled by ICE. Students were also impressed that the choir had three encores, which added to their opinion that we were welcomed and felt as though the community really wanted us there.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout the directed interviews I had with nearly all choir members after the Calbe concert, some students brought up their concerns about the concert and the day in general. Since I explicitly asked about each person’s “favorite musical moment” of the day, it would appear that the answers I received would be overly positive or might lack a complete picture of the choir. Although I have accurately deduced that, from members’ comments, that the group had an optimal experience akin to what Csikszentmihalyi describes, several members had feelings of detachment from that experience. For example, one member did not feel connected during the concert, thus leaving her with a less emotional conception of the concert. She, however, was directly cut off from the group because she was unable to see the director, lacking that uninterrupted line to one source of control and group music-making. Once the choir left the front of the church, she did feel connected and enjoyed singing the last two songs from the concert program. Two younger members recalled that their legs grew tired as the concert continued and that they were homesick and were already envisioning their reunion with their families.

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<sup>9</sup> Calbe area newspapers disagree with ICE members as to the number of encores. Instead of three, the proceeding articles report that ICE had five encores.

Another student had completely tuned out during the director's emotional pep talk because he was tired then. Despite these worries and distractions, these students had positive comments and agreed that the overall sentiment from the concerts in Calbe was that the performance was the best and most emotional yet.

The local newspaper reporters gave the choir rave reviews. "The church was proudly filled. After every song – whether gospel, traditional or pop – the applause grew louder, longer, and more incessant, before finally the public celebrated the choir with standing ovations and only allowed them to leave after five encores" (*Generalanzeiger* July 2, 2008). In an article entitled "Schöner als Fußball: Blue Lake an der Saale" – or "Better than Soccer: Blue Lake on the Saale" – Vongries further describes the ecstatic concert in Calbe.

One should be careful with superlatives, and yet it was with storms of enthusiasm, that the public, during the second part of the concert, was torn from their seats even five times, sending them into minute-long periods of applause. A euphoric mood, that is by no means ordinary in the Saale city, filled the simple church space of St. Stephanie. Almost like soccer – certainly after a winning game – and yet more affective: not just a few visitors occasionally had tears in their eyes again and again. The beauty: openness and rapture and mutual. The joy of singing was literally written on the faces of the young, wonderful singers from overseas, particularly in this centuries-old place. (*Volksstimme*, July 1, 2008)

Despite Germany's disappointing loss to Spain, the concert-goers in Calbe experienced a joy similar to that of winning the EuroCup tournament. In Calbe, the organizers did not believe it was necessary to reschedule the concert in light of this potential conflict. In fact, our director intentionally planned for our program to last only one and a half hours, thus not overlapping with the 9:00 p.m. soccer match. This plan, however, disintegrated as the audience encouraged multiple encores, taking the concert into the beginning minutes of the game. This concert was also ICE's only performance where tickets were

sold (for ten euro); the church was still packed, and an unnoticeable few left at intermission to catch the game. This town's dedication to Blue Lake's presence in their city greatly affected feelings of reciprocity and positive feedback between the choir and the citizens of Calbe. Finally, the goals of Blue Lake and ICE conquered the agenda of soccer fans in other ICE communities.<sup>10</sup>

To conclude the group's visit to Calbe, the high school hosted a "Come Together" party for ICE and their families. Students enjoyed this celebration, eating German food and socializing with each other and their hosts. Looking back, perhaps the most significant part of this celebration was the exchange of gifts between ICE and the community. ICE had already presented its musical gift to the community, and to reciprocate, each ICE member received a polo shirt from the community, black shirts featuring a silhouette of German poet Friedrich Schiller. The transition from Blue Lake "blues" to Friedrich Schiller "blacks" marked ICE's integration into the Calbe school and community. ICE members put on their new polos over their civilian clothes and mixed in with their German hosts on the party dance floor. Beyond signaling this new integration, these school polos with the "Wilhelm Tell" apple logo were presented to students and the community for the first time that evening. The school director and ICE host chairperson remarked that these shirts and the corresponding matching hats would be more than uniforms for his students, but that they would proudly be worn openly, so that a sense of group identity and unity would emerge and grow, as was present that night in Calbe.

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to our rescheduled concert in our French host community, ICE 2006's concert during its fifth visit was also rescheduled so as to avoid overlapping with a German match.

### 3.7. EUROPEAN GOODBYES

The emotional and optimal experience in Calbe marked the highpoint of the tour, and ICE was symbolically and literally integrated into the city's school and community via the wearing of black polos and the participation in Rolandfest. At the conclusion of this visit, as with many others, emotions continued to run high as ICE members gathered with their families for final goodbyes. Members left gifts for their surrogate families, and sometimes they received small mementos to remember their new European friends. In addition to the Friedrich Schiller school polo, each chorister received a metal casting of St. Stephanie Church. Just as members remarked that they had left a part of themselves in this church, they took a representation of the church home with them.

Each host visit ended with tears in the eyes of some students and parents alike. Before entering the bus, ICE sang "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," which served as a final musical thank-you and pronounced a blessing on the community. The biblical text, from Numbers 6: 24-26, functioned as a concluding benediction to our performance and service in each host community, much as the text acts at the conclusion of a religious service: "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord life His countenance upon you; and give you peace, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. Amen." When asking one student about her favorite concert, she offered, "I don't think I had a particular favorite concert, but I always loved singing to our host families right before we got on the bus, because it was such a great way to say thank you" (E-mail, January 23, 2009). From the group's arrival to its departure in blues, the three-day visit in each city was directed by the music of ICE, both in concert and in ceremonial capacities, but equally as informal musical exchanges with hosts and small groups. Students

constantly found that the best way to thank our hosts was through doing our best in concerts and presenting them with our musical gifts.

Our final goodbye followed another community celebration, this time in Belgium, taking place at midnight before the choir's trek to Paris and flight home the following morning. The previous three weeks were an emotional rollercoaster, with musical, communal and personal highs and lows. As students said their goodbyes to their final host families, to Europe, and then to each other, many could not grasp the enormity of the experience but knew that they had participated in something special, namely, a community and family building experience focused on the gift and exchange of cultures and musics.

## CHAPTER 4

### POST-TOUR

#### 4.1. BACK HOME, AT BLUE LAKE, IN MICHIGAN

After our eight-hour return flight, ICE performed its theme song one final time. As the group waited on the runway at O'Hare, the choir attempted to sing "I Can See Clearly Now" with some help from the director. The ensemble was scattered throughout the plane, leaving other passengers wondering about these Americans dressed in blue. Although the song acted as a musical offering to our fellow passengers, the group began singing the piece out of phase, caused by the distance between members and the poor acoustics of the Air France plane. Before disembarking at the international terminal, I found this last performance problematic; we sang poorly and possibly annoyed those around us who were equally as tired and uncomfortable as we were after the long flight.

Students met their families just beyond the airport security, and the difficult process of reintegration and reverse culture shock commenced. Many were excited to see their families, but they realized that this new community and family would never be the same, that something was left behind in Europe. Thankfully, most members would see each other in a week at the homecoming concert at Blue Lake on July 15.

As ICE members began arriving during the afternoon of the fifteenth, everyone rushed around to say "hello" and catch up with their friends before assembling as a choir once more, rehearsing pieces in preparation for the recording session, camp-wide concert and live radio broadcast. Barz's relation of choirs to communities occurred as ICE socialized and performed that evening. "A community gathers to re-enact ceremonies, stories, rituals, and memories through performance, and it typically functions as a direct

connection between one's cultural past and present" (Barz 2006, 25-26). As the choir worked through its repertoire in rehearsal and at the concert, memories from their time in Europe and in June and Blue Lake might have entered the mind of each person.

Equally, ICE as a community had been reworked in the context of the camp itself. Several members, including the conductor and accompanist, were attending this second camp session. These musicians had to renegotiate their relationships with current camp friends and reposition themselves within ICE both symbolically and literally as they changed from their Blue Lake blues to the white and blue concert uniform. The director welcomed everyone back once the rehearsal time began, and in addition to practicing and polishing several pieces to prepare them for recording, the director encouraged the group to make music together, just as the group had done in Europe just over a week ago.

ICE recorded its entire repertoire at the camp's outdoor concert shell, both during the live broadcast before summer campers, and beforehand to include songs that would not be performed during the concert. To showcase the musical accomplishments of touring groups, each ensemble performs on Blue Lake's home stage after the European tour; the concert also serves as an encouragement, advertisement, and incentive for current campers to apply for the following summer's international program. Plus, parents and friends of ICE members had the opportunity to hear all that the community had accomplished, both musically during each song, and through the director's commentary that touched on components of the international program and tour. Parents also gauged the level of improvement of the group, especially when comparing the choir's performances at the end of May Weekend and June Intensive Week.



The live concert concluded with uproarious applause, and the summer campers excitedly left for their cabins. ICE members started saying goodbye to one another for the second time that month and for some the last time to say goodbye. Several members, who had previous commitments, were unable to attend the Ann Arbor concert and Grass Lake, MI mini-tour. I said my goodbyes to students and staff alike, already looking forward to the mini-tour. For students I knew who could not make the mini-tour, our goodbyes were longer. One member who I helped find her connecting flight at O'Hare was particularly hard to say goodbye to; after running through three of O'Hare's terminals in order to get her to her gate in time, our quest had brought us closer together, and I was secretly relieved to see her with her parents at Blue Lake, which reassured me that she did in fact get on the right flight back home.

To my surprise, this student attended ICE's mini-tour later in July. She convinced her parents to let her go, realizing that it was important for her to sing with the group and to see her friends again. This visit to Grass Lake and Ann Arbor, Michigan was organized so that ICE could perform Schubert's Mass in G with the Blue Lake International Youth Symphony Orchestra. ICE performed for the community of Grass Lake on July 28 before the larger collaborative concert on July 29 at Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan. This concert served a similar advertisement purpose for Blue Lake, allowing for its camp ensembles to perform in different parts of Michigan and attract future donors and campers.

#### 4.2. ICE 2008 TODAY

After the Ann Arbor concert in July, ICE 2008 had officially come to an end. It seems understandable that those with friends in the group would stay in touch with one

another; even those living near each other could visit on weekends and might run into other ICE members at state and regional choral festivals and competitions. These selective bonds and encounters significantly underestimate the strong ties of the entire ICE community nearly two years after the tour. The initiatives of individual members and the programming of Blue Lake both continue to bring ICE 2008 members together, now frequently, though not exclusively, outside the camp setting.

About two months after the Ann Arbor performance, all ICE members from recent years received invitations to join in performing Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the now annual Hill Auditorium Concert event. The magnitude of the musical work required singers beyond the personnel of ICE 2009, and this opportunity for alumni kept participants linked to Blue Lake and to each other. Of the eighty-two members in the "International Alumni Choir," thirty-one members participated in ICE 2008, plus two 2008 members toured with ICE 2009. ICE 2008 contributed the largest proportion of singers to the group, and these members came from many of the different friend groups that materialized during the 2008 tour. One student recalled that the first chord the entire choir sang together was amazing; she felt the excitement of her fellow members and appreciated getting to sing such a "neat" piece with so many people at Hill Auditorium (Interview, January 23, 2010). The entire rehearsal and concert allowed for ICE members to catch up and even relive some of their time together in 2008 at practices held at Blue Lake during the 2009 Intensive Week.

Blue Lake has also recruited members to participate in the 2010 Hill Auditorium performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and the International Exchange Program has recently expanded to include a new choral touring ensemble. This group can consist of

ICE alumni, Blue Lake alumni, and Blue Lake donors. Intended to be a group of adults, these members have the opportunity to perform *Elijah* with ICE 2010 and the String Orchestra, have host family stays in three different European communities, and have more free time and freedom to tour European cities on their own. This new arrangement equally achieved the needs of contributing more mature singers to the choir and making new ambassadorial connections with Europeans and Americans. Although it is unlikely that any ICE 2008 participants will join this group (as those under age twenty-one are required to have a parent along with them), several are planning to work at Blue Lake as summer camp counselors. Their experiences with ICE will surely factor into their communication with their campers and fellow counselors.

Most significantly, the ICE 2008 community has mutated into a digital community on Facebook. Before the April rehearsal, members had already created a “group” for ICE 2008, representing their digital networking leading up to tour departure. Sixty of the seventy-six ICE participants are “group” members, and the comments continued into 2010. Two members are currently organizing reunions for ICE: one taking place at Blue Lake during ICE 2010’s homecoming concert, and another at a central location convenient for most members. This event and group, with fifty-nine and fifty-two invitees/members respectively, only touches the surface of digital interaction between members. ICE members continuously keep in touch via Facebook, some even live near one another as they attend the same colleges, and students have taken special trips to spend holidays and weekends with their friends from different states. The tour experiences and musical accomplishments of ICE 2008 persist in the minds of these friends, and the community will persevere for many as they mature.

#### 4.3. “HAND IN HAND:” ICE AS AMBASSADORS

The message of “Hand in Hand” and reflections by students post-tour represent the influence of the International Exchange on participants. With music as its centerpiece, providing ambassadorial goodwill, gifts of appreciation, and a means to achieving mutual cultural understanding, the tour program communicated these ideals to audience members, host families, and ICE students.

When asking members which song they liked the best from the ICE repertoire, several mentioned “Hand in Hand.” Two students expressed their thoughts about the song early in the tour, even linking the song to its effect on them at the conclusion of the tour.

Member 1: “Hand in Hand” ... I just, I like the, like, the meaning of the song, like... the like, music itself is really simple and stuff, but “Hand in Hand,” like, the meaning, like, is present, no matter, like, what you do.

Member 2: I mean, the weird thing about it is, like, every time we sing it, like, I just have this weird, like, flash of, like, “What’s it gonna be like when we sing it at the homecoming concert.” Like, it’s going to be really sad, and it’s going to be like, really, like, tearful, and, oh my god, I’m going to cry. Sorry... [student began crying] (Interview, June 19, 2008)

These students’ responses, particularly the emotional response of the second member, alerted me to the significance of the piece within the context of ICE for the first time. During the 2006 tour, the piece had no specific personal meaning to me. As one student notes, the music is not challenging, but the optimistic message of the text led students to choose the piece as their tour favorite (See Appendix B). Other ICE members liked and related to the pop-like quality of the arrangement. The appeal of “Hand in Hand” and other similar songs from the ICE repertoire also highlights an area for further research. Audiences and singers enjoyed this music and the musical value and aesthetics of such pieces deserve consideration among other genres of choral music.

This song is part of ICE's history; originally Pro Gospel, from Kellinghusen, shared the song with our director, requesting that ICE learn the piece to perform with the German choir. Since 2005, the song has been a staple of the repertoire, and ICE 2008 took ownership of the song in several ways. During the concerts in Calbe and at Blue Lake, many students consciously reached out across the risers, taking their neighbor's hands at the conclusion of the piece. In Calbe, some students were unable to sing the piece because it had brought tears to their eyes. When recording the tour repertoire at the homecoming concert, "Hand in Hand" was slotted for the pre-concert recording session, but time did not allow for its recording. Instead, the director squeezed "Hand in Hand" in to the live concert, despite the time restraints of the radio program. This song was not to be forgotten; its presence on our recordings and in our concert outweighed any of the consequences going over time might have brought to the director or the group. ICE had accepted the song's challenge; to summarize the song's text: we lifted our voices in a song and saw that our differences are what really make us strong.

Before ICE's concert at Grass Lake, Michigan, one student summed up her entire summer experience for me. Below I present part of our interview together:

RGH: What have you learned from this whole experience?

Member: How much I love Germany! I think I've learned the value of, um, not just music, but being able to, um, build relationships with people from different countries and the value of going other places and experiencing new things and learning how much you can, um, grow from that. I mean, looking back, the trip was not just about music, it was about, like, just being, learning about the other people and building relationships with them and just getting to know, like, sharing, exchanging, um, not just ideas, but ways of life. [...]

RGH: Do you think that a trip like this would be possible without music as the reason why we went?

Member: Possible maybe, but not as valuable. Music was kind of a binding factor. It really helped you connect with the communities. And, I mean, I, I think the concert in Calbe is one of the main reasons that I value that stay the most. It was just so incredible. [...] I think, I think it's music, like, [that] takes you to another level, you know, you have to... it's more emotional I want to say, it's like you're more, um, when words aren't enough, you sing. And the music is what really [brings] you there and what makes it really memorable. [...]

RGH: What do you think us as a group, as a choir, have learned from the experience? [...]

Member: Well, I definitely think that there is more of a connection within the group now. I think our songs have become so much more personal and we've kind of learned how [...] personal music can be and how much, how, what a gift it is, you know, what... Because at the beginning of the trip it was like Mr. White talked about how, um, our music would be our gift, and I was like, "Yeah, I suppose," you know. I didn't realize how true that was until I went on the trip and realized, you know, those... the concerts were really important to me because my families were there. (Interview, July 28, 2008)

For this singer, music played a central role for the tour. It bound the choir together as a performing group and community, and, for her, this music communicated a message of thanks, gratitude and solidarity to European hosts. Even before the end of the tour, some members identified ICE as a community, accomplishing the lofty musical and ambassadorial goals placed on the ensemble, and wrestling with differences in language and culture by communicating in what this student believed to be a more universally understood medium—music.

#### 4.4. STUDY RESULTS

This choir's adaptability allowed for diverse audiences to experience the music the group presented; concerts held in atypical spaces, such as school courtyards, city centers, and even briefly after landing in Chicago, exposed more people to ICE's repertoire package of American music. As runners, shoppers, dancers, horseback riders,

instrumentalists and singers, the diverse backgrounds and interests of each Blue Lake member coalesced with those of their fellow singers and hosts scattered across six countries and two continents. With the help and guidance of a dynamic and beloved director and leader, the group prioritized their goals and ideals around the thoughts and conducted movements of this father figure and friend.

The dialogues between students reveal the thoughts of these American adolescents. Their contributions to how ICE became a community and their interactions with Europeans reveal how their motivations and adaptations to the strenuous Blue Lake rehearsal and touring schedule constituted the exchange of ideas about musics and cultures. Even their voices, either represented musically during concerts or informally in the quotations in this study, substantially display the emotions of performing together and the complexities of performing their identities as teenagers.

Blue Lake, as a camp space, strongly affected the trajectory of this group's community formation. The continuous close proximity, the intimate living conditions, the extended rehearsal periods, and the near complete absence of outside distractions helped ICE to get to know one another in an unusually short amount of time, allowing them to make staggering progress as a musical ensemble and produce performance after emotional performance. Even the camp uniform contributed to their feelings of community, encouraging members to view one another as equal and essential to the ensemble and serving as a visual marker of group performance and community in the eyes of European hosts. Blue Lake's International Exchange staff entrusted the program's values of musical exchange and cultural ambassadorship to this select group, challenging and commissioning ICE to serve as political actors for the camp and the United States.

Therefore, during their frequent concerts, ICE represented themselves as a tightly-knit community, capable of high musical success and worthy of praise. ICE, as a community and as individuals, brought their musical and personal gifts to their hosts, performing in new community groups, whether with their host families, in classes with students their age, or when officially acting as ambassadors at regional and national celebrations.

The accomplishments of ICE will continue to be re-presented as members mature and progress as musicians and cultural ambassadors. ICE has not concluded. It is difficult to draw conclusions about young people at the cusp of their adult lives. In the spirit of Abu-Lughod, this group and these individuals remain members of multiple communities that will produce new insights into the fields of cultural and musical exchange. She states, “To have tried to sum up their [stories] significance would have reduced them further. It would, in the end, have diminished their power and their potential to overflow our analytical categories” (2008, *xxxii*). Each ICE member’s stories and experiences play out in their lives, whether back at home, at college, or later. The absence of the ethnographer does not constitute the end of study and revelation of conclusions.

#### 4.5. FURTHER QUESTIONS

This study addresses many of Ahlquist’s questions and concerns, but several topics relevant to this study, or areas for expansion, and of choirs and communities in general, require additional attention. As Ahlquist interestingly notes, the significance of gender in adult and adolescent choirs might reveal unique meanings concerning community formation. She mentions the political roles played by lesbian and gay choirs, and I further wonder to what extent sexuality plays out in mixed choirs. Although I observed romantic encounters between ICE members and was somewhat aware of issues



of sexuality within the group, I chose not to address the matter in this study for two reasons. First, these interactions, while interesting and relevant to how members related to each other, were not necessary to show how these students became a community. Second, and most significantly, I wanted to protect my informants, co-choir members, and friends from any negative attention such inquiries might elicit. Protecting their identities, emotional well-being and privacy remained and still remains my primary goal as a staff counselor and ethnographer.

Issues of gender relations and sexuality, however, do deserve scholarly consideration. To address these topics, I believe that working with an older ensemble would be a better and safer alternative than working with youth, and choosing an ensemble that could remain anonymous, in contrast to ICE as a specific group with a public and sometimes political appearance, would allow for more thorough work with sexuality and difference.

I also regret not having the time to work with host families and communities more and accessing their opinions about ICE. Just as the choir itself is interesting to study, the process of inviting and then hosting a choir to perform and stay with a community would reveal some of the intermediary steps that factor into creating the spaces and places of musical and cultural performance and exchange. As members from diverse European audiences, their reception of ICE and its music would reveal beneficial comments, musical critiques and understandings of the music and texts either complementary or contradictory to those presented by ICE students. Responses to specific pieces, such as “Hand in Hand” and “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” could show how the

calculated messages of ambassadorial goodwill and cultural exchange register in the minds of those intended to receive such messages.

Another demographic largely excluded from this study is the students' parents. As the other ICE staff members and I contemplated the expectations of different actors in the International Program, we discussed general expectations parents would have for the trip: that their students are well-cared for, safe, and have a positive experience. While getting to know ICE students, some mentioned their parent's roles in exposing them to musical genres as children, and others indicated that their parents strongly influenced their decision to participate in the Blue Lake International Exchange. Those interested in similar projects might conduct interviews with parents as well as students throughout the study, thus contributing to a better understanding of a family's motivation for allowing students to participate and to measure any subsequent changes in attitudes or musical abilities upon return.

To round out a study involving adolescents, more and longer term follow-up interviews with ICE members would reveal how the ICE experience plays out in their adult lives. Within the restrictions of this project's abbreviated timeframe, it was difficult to elicit a large sample of ICE participants for further questioning after the tour concluded. Once members reach adulthood, asking them about tour events, now as an ethnographer and not as an authority figure and employee of Blue Lake, could produce additional insight into thoughts on sensitive areas concerning discord in the group.

Just as working with European audiences and ICE parents would provide a more thorough picture of the Blue Lake/Europe experience, more attention should be dedicated to the interactions and perceptions of European and American musical groups performing

together. ICE members openly shared their opinions about the Big Band, Pro Gospel, Gospel Choir, and Bückeburg choir, even when their thoughts were more critical of the other musicians. Martin Stokes, in the introduction to *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, emphasizes that all musics “are defined and constructed in competitions, festivals, conferences and tourist promotions. [...] In spite of the language of global participation, these events are power struggles” (1994, 15, 16). ICE made value judgments about the music they encountered, placing their music and that of their hosts in hierarchies of skill and importance. While the reception of the Big Band was overwhelmingly positive, members thought that ICE was better than Pro Gospel. No ICE performances were characterized by official competitions, but the characteristic of evaluating their musical peers and families still emerged as an unavoidable act and theme in interviews. This presents the necessity of studying youth and adult choirs within the context of competitions. Musical competitions, while focusing on the competitive element of performance, can equally encourage the goals of musical and cultural exchange, offering new understandings of music from different parts of one country or the world. These Blue Lake values of cultural exchange and ambassadorial goodwill are frames for studying music competitions in the United States, Germany, France and beyond. Again, power struggles between and within any musical group or community might reveal the complicated relationships, aesthetic values, and personal beliefs of insiders and outsiders.

The study of choirs, as bodies of individuals constituting complex communities, moves scholarship beyond the concerns of famous conductors, musical repertoire, and even pedagogical techniques and exposes the rich contributions individuals and particular

groups make in societies, cross-culturally and even between different generations. ICE offered its musical gifts of thanks to many during the summer of 2008. This international tour experience has expanded their world and frames of reference. Their roles and contributions as cultural and musical ambassadors has not gone unnoticed by the host communities, parents, Blue Lake staff or the ethnographer who grew to know them and appreciate their unique take on life and music as part of the International Choral Ensemble Community.

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## APPENDIX A

### ICE 2008 CONCERT REPERTOIRE

The ICE repertoire is listed below in approximate concert order. The choir never performed a concert including every piece.<sup>11</sup>

Title	Composer/ Arranger <sup>12</sup>	Voicing	Arr./Instru- mentation	Solos	Copyright Information
As I Went Down To The River To Pray	Trad. Spiritual	S(S)A(A)TB <sup>13</sup>	a cappella	None	2003
The Gift To Be Simple	Trad. Shaker, Bob Chilcott	S(S)ATB(B)	a cappella	None	1989 Hal Leonard
Loch Lomond	Trad. Scottish, Jonathan Quick	S(S)AT(T)B(B)	a cappella	Male & Female	2000 Cypress Pub.
O Nata Lux	Morten Lauridsen	S(S)A(A) T(T)B(B)	a cappella	None	1997 Peer Music
There Will Be Rest	Frank Ticheli	SSAATTBB	a cappella	None	2000 Hinshaw Music
Michigan Morn	H. Owen Reed	S(S)A(A)TB	piano	One Solo	1955 Mills Music
O Schöne Nacht	Johannes Brahms	SATB	piano	None	1971 G. Schirmer
Voice Dance	Greg Jasperse	SA(A)T(T)B(B)	a cappella	None	2003 Shawnee Press
Swingin' With the Saints	Trad. Spiritual Mark Hayes,	S(S)AT(T)B	piano	None	1981 Shawnee Press
Hallelujah	Jeff Buckley, Mark Webb	S(S)A(A) T(T)B(B)	a cappella, vocal perc.	One Solo	2008
Esto Les Digo	Kinley Lange	SATB	a cappella	Sop. Solo	2001, Alliance Music Pub.
I Can See Clearly Now	Rockapella, Mark Webb	S(S)ATB	a cappella, vocal perc.	None	2005
Steal Away	Trad. Spiritual, Joseph Jennings	S(S)A(A) T(T)B(B)	a cappella	Two Solos	1991 Hinshaw
Hold On!	Trad. Spiritual, Eugene Simpson	S(S)A(A) T(T)B(B)	a cappella	None	1974 Murbo Music Pub.
Take Five	Paul Desmond, Kirby Shaw	SATB	keyboard	None	2003 Alfred Publishing
Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye	Cole Porter, Mark Webb	SATB	a cappella	None	2006
You Raise Me Up	Josh Groban, Ed Lojeki	SATB	a cappella	One Solo	2005 Hal Leonard
When I Fall In Love	Victor Young, Mark Webb	S(S)ATB	a cappella	M/F Duet	2008
Mayberry	Rascal Flatts, Mark Webb	S(S)A(A) T(T)B(B)	a cappella	None	2005

<sup>11</sup> This list excludes pieces performed only with specific host community ensembles.

<sup>12</sup> Where both a composer and arranger are present, the composer is listed first. In cases where famous recording artists have sung the pieces, their names are given in lieu of the composer's.

<sup>13</sup> The abbreviations in SATB represent soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Voice parts that appear in parentheses represent voice part splitting that is not indicated in the official voicing of the piece.

Go Where I Send Thee	Paul Caldwell & Sean Ivory	SSATB	piano	None	1995 Earthsongs
Worthy To Be Praised!	Bryon Smith	SATB	piano	None	1993 Alfred Publishing
Hand in Hand	Rodgers & Walker, Kirby Shaw	SATB	piano	None	1987 Shawnee Press
Praise His Holy Name!	Keith Hampton	SATB	piano	Male Solo	1998 Earthsongs
The Lord Bless You and Keep You	Peter Lutkin	SATB	a cappella	None	1956 Boston Music Co.
Mass in G <sup>14</sup>	Franz Schubert	SATB	organ, strings	STB	1954 Hal Leonard

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<sup>14</sup> Schubert's Mass in G was performed with the International Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Ann Arbor concert at the end of July. Soloists for this piece were selected from the orchestra personnel and not the choral personnel. No movements or portions of this work were performed during the ICE tour, although rehearsal time in May and June was dedicated to learning the piece and rehearsing with the orchestra.

## APPENDIX B

### “HAND IN HAND” LYRICS

Lyrics to “Hand in Hand” by Dawn Rodgers and Tricia Walker

Verse 1:

We’re in a day when we must look beyond ourselves  
and see into the hearts of others.  
As brother looks to brother and we walk with one another,  
we’ll find that anyone can be a friend.

Chorus:

Hand in hand, we’ll be the strongest we can be  
if we learn how to stand by those in need.  
With shoulder pressed to shoulder we will build a mighty wall,  
and nothing in the world can make us fall,  
if we stand hand in hand.

Verse 2:

Some people say there’s not a lot that we can learn,  
but I know there’s so much love that we’re not livin’.  
If all that we’ve been given we can learn to give away,  
we’ll find that we can build a brighter day.

Repeat Chorus

Bridge:

If we can learn to lift our voices in a song,  
we’ll see it’s our differences that really make us strong

Chorus with Coda:

Hand in hand, we’ll be the strongest we can be  
if we learn how to stand by those in need.  
With shoulder pressed to shoulder we will build a mighty wall,  
and nothing in the world can make us fall,  
if we stand (if we stand)  
if we stand (only if we stand)  
if we stand (if we’re standing)  
hand in hand!

## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS

#### Adult Informed Consent Document

##### Musical Exchange: The Molding of Today's Youth Through Transnational Choral Concerting

**Purpose of the Study:** My name is Reneé Gordon, and I am a graduate student at the University of Illinois in the Music Department. As part of my research project, supervised by Dr. Gayle Magee from the Music Department at the University of Illinois, I would like to include you, along with other International Choral Ensemble (ICE) members, and members from host communities, in a project on how your experiences of and ideas about music affect you as part of this exchange.

**Procedures to be followed:** Your involvement would include participating in interviews and observations during activities where photos or recordings may be made. These activities will occur before, during, and after ICE's time in Europe.

**Risks and Benefits:** Though ICE's international exchange is an exciting and positive experience for all involved, sometimes the experiences may be emotionally, physically, or mentally taxing. The risks to the emotional or mental health of those who participate in research activities for this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. As a member of the staff, my primary job is to assist those who face these challenges. However, I think that this research will help you to think about your experiences and create new ideas about different music and cultures. You could contribute to scholarship about music, culture, and international exchange by sharing your thoughts during ICE's tour.

**Voluntariness:** Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Only if you give consent can you participate in this research, and you may stop taking part at any time for any reason without penalty. These decisions will have no effect on your participation in any Blue Lake activities or future relations with the University of Illinois.

**Statement of Confidentiality:** Information obtained during this project will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the results will not identify any participants by name, **individual** photos, videos or recordings unless you give further express consent. Any photos or other identifiable information selected for dissemination will not increase risk to the participant. This research, including **group** photos, videos, and music recordings, may appear in music journals, scholarly papers, conference presentations, or other publications. No images will identify participants by name.

**Whom to contact:** If you have any questions about this project, please contact me or my faculty advisor. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this form for your records.

Sincerely,

Reneé M. Gordon

Dr. Gayle Sherwood Magee

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, am 18 years old or older and have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I consent to (check all that apply): \_\_\_\_ Being recorded during interviews \_\_\_\_ Being photographed or recorded in videos.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature, Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Phone Number, Email Address

## Parental Consent Form

### Musical Exchange: The Molding of Today's Youth Through Transnational Choral Concerting

Dear Parent:

My name is Reneé Gordon, and I am a graduate student at the University of Illinois in the Music Department. As part of my research supervised by Dr. Gayle Magee from the Music Department at the University of Illinois, I would like to include your child, along with other International Choral Ensemble (ICE) members, and members from our host communities, in a project on how your child's experiences of and ideas about music impact him or her as part of ICE in the USA and Europe.

Your child's involvement in this study would include participating in interviews and observations during activities where photos or recordings may be made. These activities will occur before, during, and after our time in Europe.

Though traveling and singing in Europe together is an exciting and positive opportunity for all involved in ICE, sometimes the experiences may be emotionally, physically, or mentally taxing. As a counselor and ICE staff member this summer, my job is first to help your child when he or she faces these challenges. The risks to participating in any group or interview activities are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Again, looking after each person's well-being is my first and primary concern for all ICE members.

Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child must sign an assent form to take part in this project. Only those children who have parental permission and who want to participate can do so, and any child may stop taking part at any time in my project. You are free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty. These decisions will have no effect on your child's participation in any ICE activities or future relations with the University of Illinois.

Project information will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the results will not identify any participants by name, **individual** photos, videos or recordings unless further express consent is given by both you and your child. Any photos or other identifiable information selected for dissemination will not increase risk to the participant. The information, including **group** photos, videos, and recordings, may appear in music journals, scholarly papers, conference presentations or other publications. No images will identify participants by name.

In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether you **will or will not** allow your child to participate in this project and whether interviews with your child may be recorded. Also indicate if your child may be photographed or recorded. Please return this note with your child during the May Rehearsal Weekend.

I look forward to working with your child. I think that this research will help ICE members to think about their experiences and create new ideas about different music and cultures. Your child can contribute to scholarship about international exchange and share his or her ideas about music they've experienced at home and abroad.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me or my faculty advisor. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Reneé M. Gordon

Dr. Gayle Sherwood Magee

\*\*\*\*\*

**I do/do not (circle one) give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child) to participate in the research project described above.**

**My child can be (check all that apply): \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded during interviews. \_\_\_\_\_ Photographed or recorded in videos.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) Parent's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Phone Number, Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Adolescent Informed Assent Document**

Musical Exchange: The Molding of Today's Youth Through Transnational Choral Concerting

**Purpose of the Study:** My name is Reneé Gordon, and I am a graduate student at the University of Illinois in the Music Department. As part of my research project, supervised by Dr. Gayle Magee from the Music Department at the University of Illinois, I would like to include you, along with other International Choral Ensemble (ICE) members, and members from host communities, in a project on how your experiences of and ideas about music affect you as part of this exchange.

**Procedures to be followed:** Your involvement would include participating in interviews and observations during activities where photos or recordings may be made. These activities will occur before, during, and after ICE's time in Europe.

**Risks and Benefits:** Though ICE's international exchange is an exciting and positive experience for all involved, sometimes these experiences may be emotionally, physically, or mentally taxing. The risks to the emotional or mental health of those who participate in research activities for this project are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. As a member of the Blue Lake staff, my job is primarily to assist those who face these challenges. However, I think that this research will help you to think about your experiences and create new ideas about different music and cultures. Even as adolescents, you could contribute to scholarship about music, culture, and international exchange by sharing your thoughts during ICE's tour.

**Voluntariness:** Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Only if you agree and your parent or legal guardian consents can you participate in this research. You may stop taking part at any time for any reason without penalty, and your legal guardian and withdraw consent at any time. These decisions will have no effect on your participation in any Blue Lake activities or future relations with the University of Illinois.

**Statement of Confidentiality:** Information obtained during this project will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the results will not identify any participants by name, **individual** photos, videos or recordings unless you give further express agreement and your parent or legal guardian gives further express consent. Any photos or other identifiable information selected for dissemination will not increase risk to the participant. This research, including **group** photos, videos, and recordings, may appear in music journals, scholarly papers, conference presentations, or other publications. No images will identify participants by name.

**Whom to contact:** If you have any questions about this project, please contact me or my faculty advisor. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or irb@uiuc.edu. You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this form for your records.

Sincerely,

Reneé M. Gordon

Dr. Gayle Sherwood Magee

\*\*\*\*\*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am between the ages of 8 and 17, have read and understand the above assent form, and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I assent to (check all that apply): \_\_\_\_ Being recorded during interviews \_\_\_\_ Being photographed or recorded in videos.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adolescent Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Reneé Gordon Holley graduated from Truman State University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy/Religion and Music. During her undergraduate studies she spent a semester in Salzburg, Austria, attending Salzburg College. Following graduation, Holley studied musicology at the Albert-Ludwigs Universität in Freiburg, Germany as a Fulbright Student Grantee. Holley plans to continue with the Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology at the University of Illinois; her tentative dissertation topic addresses how the European Union utilizes music in its cultural policy, specifically relating to events and policies in Germany.